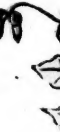


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# BORDER CANUCKS:

OUR  
FRIENDLY RELATIONS

A NOVEL



BY GEO. CAMERON RANKIN

— AUTHOR OF —

"THE CANUCK" AND OTHER PLAYS.

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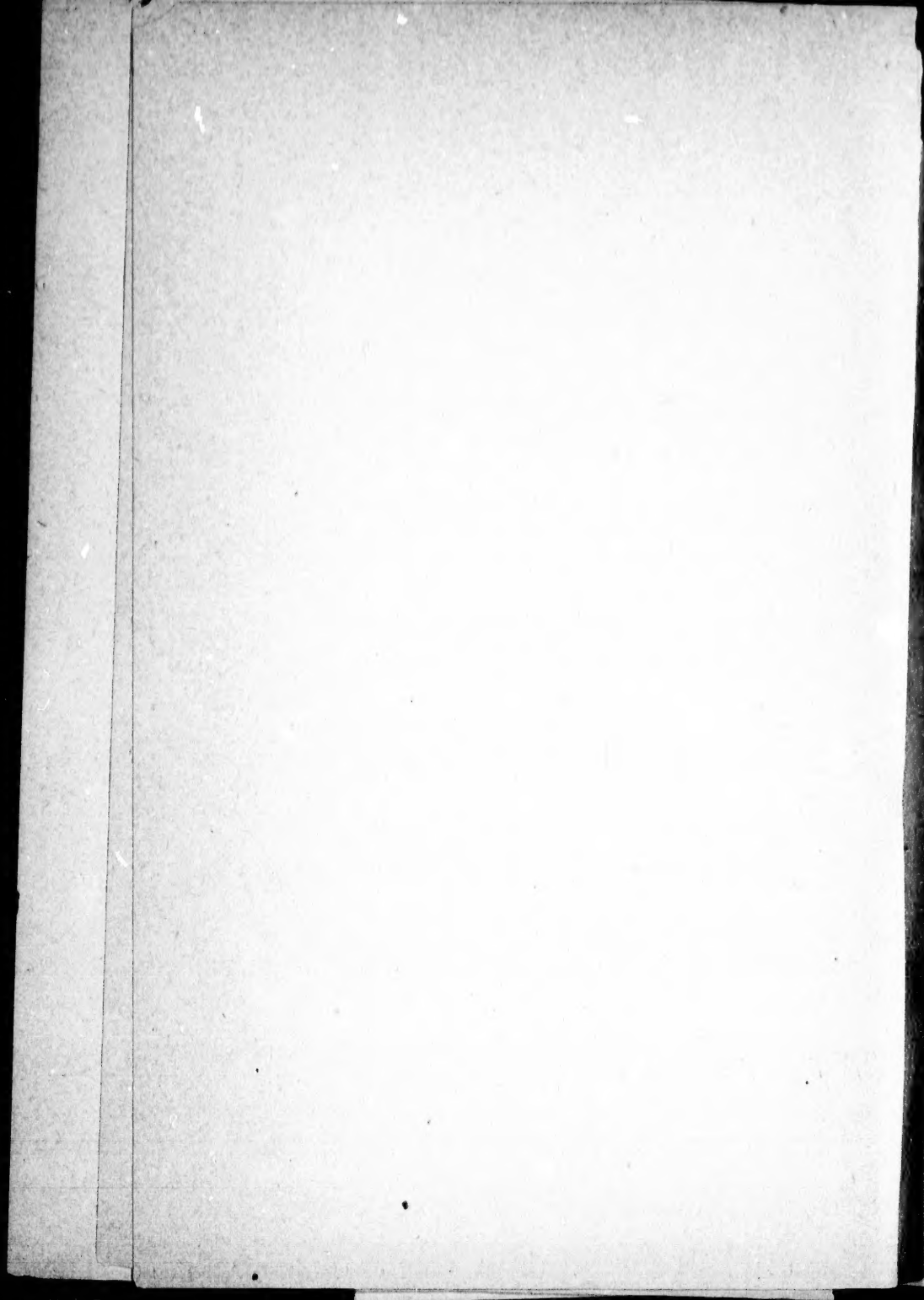
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DEDICATION.

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WITH BEST WISHES FOR HIS  
WELFARE AND ADVANCEMENT, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED  
TO MY FRIEND,  
THE HON. CHARLES W. CASGRAIN,  
CITY ATTORNEY, DETROIT, MICH.

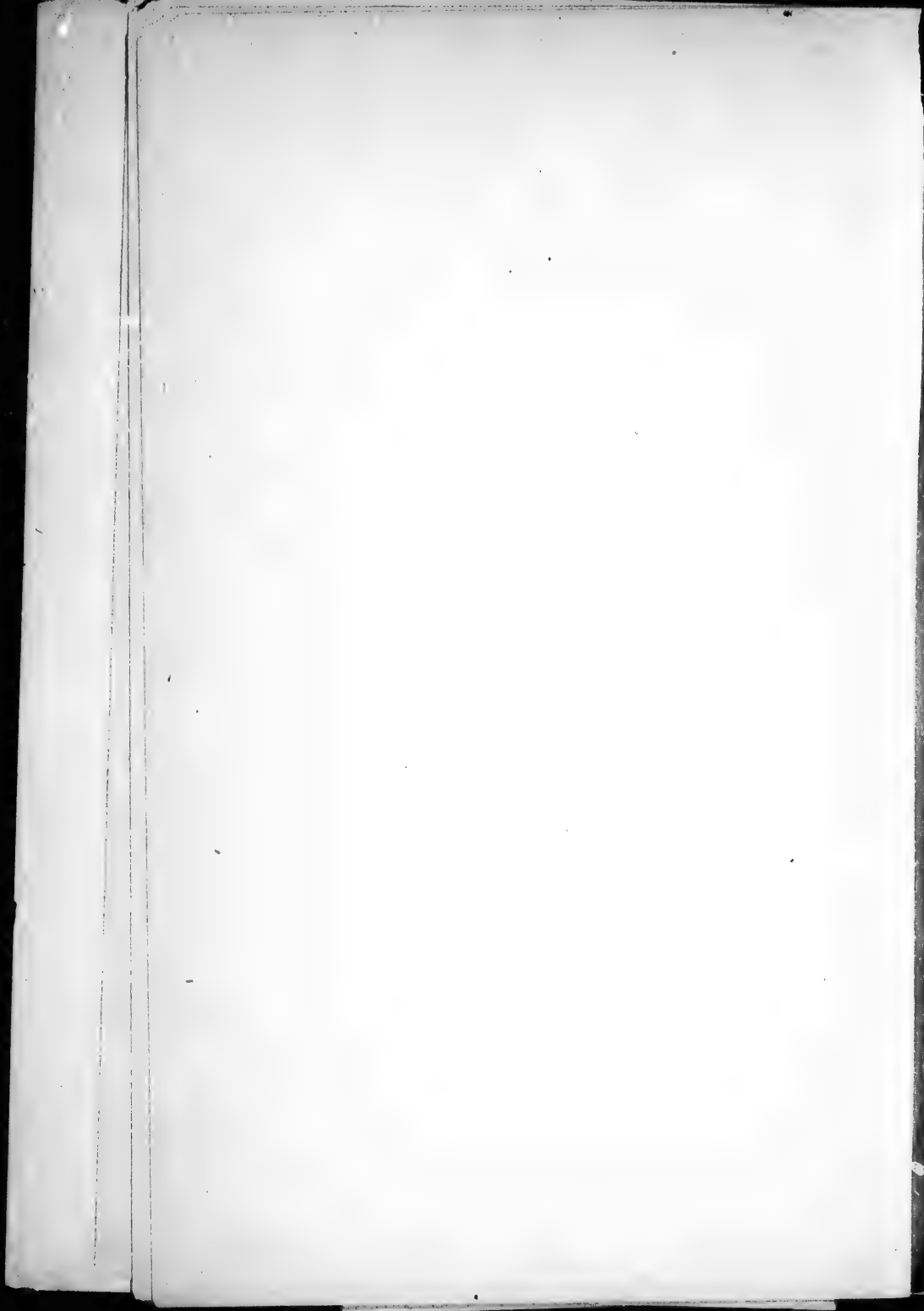
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# BORDER CANUCKS;

## OUR FRIENDLY RELATIONS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *Les deux amis.*

**I**T WAS the 29th of January, 187—, in the city of Detroit, in the State of Michigan.

The reaction following the busy and joyous Christmas holiday season was at its height, and dullness held its dampening sway throughout the retail shops and market places of the fair metropolis.

It had been snowing in the early morning—a dry, mealy sort of snow, which did but little to improve the already tolerably good sleighing.

Now, at eleven o'clock in the day, the overcast, darkening sky, and surcharged flying clouds gave sign of another storm near at hand, while the whistling wind which rushed about the four corners, formed by the intersection of the two broad chief thoroughfares of the city, in boisterous disturbance, suggested an invisible game of blind man's buff in full blast.

The horses on the neighboring cab-stand hunched their backs and bowed their heads as well as their cruel over-checks would allow, and squeezed their tails between their hocks as if they fain would squeeze themselves inside of themselves until the gathering storm rolled by, while frost-laden blasts came trooping up from the frozen river, and, arriving at the nearest of the four corners, would suddenly stop as if disgusted at the abnormal dullness of the streets, and, gathering up a modicum of the newly-fallen snow, fly away with it in spiral columns towards the regions whence it had so recently come.

In the midst of this portentous condition of the elements a young man wearing a Persian lamb's-fur overcoat and cap, and driving a grey pony in a well-robed, fashionable Portland sleigh passed westward down one of the intersecting streets until he came to a large wholesale and retail store with an imposing front, when he stopped, got out, and proceeded to tie the pony to a hitching-post on the curb.

While he was in the act of doing this there came out of the store a middle-aged looking man, considerably above the medium height, with black, or dark brown hair tinged with grey, and dark blue eyes, having a sad expression in them until they caught sight of the youth at the pony's head, when they took on a pleased look, and the whole face lighted up with good-natured recognition.

He wore a full beard, and his dress was a near approach to the winter costume of the typical French Canadian *habitant*.

His overcoat was of a light brownish-grey, homespun, secured by a dark red sash about the waist, while his

trousers were of a shade lighter color of the same material, and at the bottom were stuffed inside the short legs of a pair of shoe pacs. On his head he wore a very seedy muskrat fur cap, and upon his left arm hung a large sized hand-basket, which upon examination would be found to contain a couple of empty bags.

As the youth, while carefully covering the pony with a thick scarlet horse cloth, caught sight of the other, he cried out in a surprised and pleased tone of voice: "Hello, Jock, old fellow, I'm awfully glad to see you! I was just thinking about you as I drove down."

"Bah gosh, Monsieur Jack," responded the Frenchman, as he crossed the sidewalk towards the youth, "dat's long tam Ah not see you. How was you *mon cher ami*? And they shook hands demonstratively.

"Oh, I'm all right, thank you Jock," replied the other. "I don't know how it is that I've happened to miss you whenever you've been in the city of late. I have heard of your being in the store twice since Christmas, but I've never happened to come in either time you were here."

"No, you see Ah've always be een hurray de lass tree four tam Ah've be on de ceetay."

"Yes, but why more so than usual? But let's get out of the wind" suggested the youth, and they went and stood within the shelter of the capacious entrance to the retail department of the store. "Well, you see," resumed the Frenchman, "mah Meeses have not be well lately. She have de rheumatiss pootay bad, an de two youngess chile have de meezle, an what wus wuss of all *pauvre* leetle Marie have kotch cole wit de fever 'bout a mons ago, an

Ah wus 'fraid she wus goin be very seeck, an so you see Ah have always be ankshus to got back home soon's Ah kin whenever Ah have be on de ceetay lately."

"Why, I am real sorry you've been in such trouble, Jock," exclaimed the youth, sympathetically, "and how are they now?"

"Oh, dey wus all raght agin, tank God."

"I am glad to hear it," replied the young man, heartily, "and my especial little friend Archange, she has not been ill I hope?"

"Ah, no. Archange she's nevaire seek. You know dey ses she's look lac me, an dough she doan look lac she's strong, she wus tuff lac Eengeen rubber."

"I tell you, Jock, that's going to be a pretty girl when she grows up," exclaimed the youth, admiringly. But I'm glad to hear Mrs. Laforge and the other sick ones are all right again, too."

"Ah, yas! de Meeses she's move 'roun all raght agin, an Marie, *pauvre* chile, was work hard all de tam braiden straw every day, every day, from de tam she's got up een de morning teel she's go to bed at naight. Why, Monsieur Jack," continued the Frenchman, rousing up, "fur how much wurt you tink dat leetle Marie could mac een ten day braiden straw for dees store?"

"I'm sure I don't know," responded the youth, "but I do know that she is a remarkably bright and clever little girl."

"Well sair," said Jock, as if he were giving utterance to something scarcely credible, "you kin bleeve me *ou* no jews you's mine to, *mais* Ah have got on mah pockette now

at dees tam jewst eight dollaire an seextay cent dat leetle thing have arne een ten workin day."

"Eight dollars and sixty cents in ten days," repeated the youth in surprise, "very nearly a dollar a day! Well, by Jove! That is good wages for a little crippled girl of twelve years old to earn, and no mistake."

"Yas sair," said the Frenchman, proudly, "and heur braid was always fust-class. Eet always fatch de bess prasse. Ah'll toll you she's help keep it de famlay good deal on dose hard tam wit me."

"Poor little thing," exclaimed the youth, tenderly, "I must go down and see her and the rest of the family before I go away."

"Ah! was you go 'way, Monsieur Jack?" enquired the Frenchman in surprise. "*Excusé moi mon cher, mais* where was you go?"

"I'm going to New York before the end of the week, and I wanted in any case to go down and see you about stowing away or disposing of my duck skiff and decoys."

"Aw, yo skeef an de dekye was all een de barn to home, an dey cood stay dare unteel you wants dem een de spring."

"But I don't think I shall be here in the spring. However," continued the youth, "I'll tell you all about my plans when I go down to see you to-morrow or next day, if it's fine."

"Aw well, dat's all raght den, you goan come an see us befor you goes," exclaimed the Frenchman, satisfiedly, tightening his coat around him and pulling his muskrat cap down further over his head as he looked up at the gathering clouds. "On de meen tam, eef Ah doan start

now, bah gosh! Ah bleeve de storm goan kotch me beefore Ah wus got half ways home," and turning to the youth with a kindly smile upon his face and outstretched right hand, he said: "Good-bye Monsieur Jack. Good-bye fur de pressen," and they shook hands heartily.

"Good-bye Jock till I see you again."

"Mine, we wus goan look fur you to-morrow *ou* de nex day fur sure," enjoined the Frenchman. "Goodbye Monsieur Jack," and he hurriedly took his way down the street towards the ferry that crossed to the Canadian side of the river.

Thus parted, for the time being, these two friends in the gathering storm—the one Jacques Lafo'ge to his home on the River Canard, on the Canadian side, ten miles below the city—the other young John Rathbone, the only son of Mr. Robert Rathbone, the senior partner of the firm of Rathbone and Ritter, into whose spacious place of business he now entered.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Muskrat Farm.*

THE FIRM of Rathbone and Ritter were extensive dealers in furs, hats, caps and straw goods and for a quarter of a century past had held a leading position throughout the Union as manufacturers of what is known to the trade as "hand made Mackinaw straw braid." This circumstance it is presumed was in great measure due to the fact of their proximity to an extensive settlement of people whose women folk from time immemorial have made the braiding of straw for hats and bonnets an industry of the fireside and home.

The narrow stretch of low-lying country on the Canadian side extending from Stony Point, on Lake St. Clair, to the River Canard, a sluggish, turbid stream which empties its brackish waters into the Detroit River some half dozen miles above its mouth at the head of Lake Erie (the whole being about thirty-five miles in length and from three to five miles in depth from its front on the lake and river), is known upon the local county maps as the French survey. It is so designated because of the fact that in common with all other old French settlements on the continent founded by the followers of Lasalle and the Jesuits, it was originally divided off into tiers, called *concessions*, of attenuated lots three *arpents*\* wide by thirty in depth.

These *parteres* are still largely occupied by descendants of the adventurous *harbingers* of civilization under *le regime de*

\*An *arpent* is twelve feet less than a lineal English acre.



*la Nouvelle France*, who with a characteristic quaint conservatism peculiar to their remarkable race, to this day practice many of the old time customs and still possess many of the domestic habits which their ancestors sailed from Northern France with three hundred years and more ago. Indeed, there are to this day certain localities throughout this "French survey" that from a social and religious point of view are as exclusively French as are any of the cantonments or prefectures of old France; and Monsieur Ernest Gagnon in his commendable compilation "*Les Chansons populaires du Canada*" makes what can not but be regarded as an extraordinary announcement, and that is that the French Canadians in some respects have been far more conservative of certain ancient peasant customs extant in France three hundred years ago, than have their cousins of the mother country.

However that may be, the Riviere Canard settlement at the outset of the period of this story was to all intents and purposes an exclusively French community which counted among its resident members Jacques Laforge, small farmer, hunter, trapper, fisherman and the husband and father respectively of a wife and little crippled daughter, the eldest of a numerous family, who plaited straw braid, in common with numerous other wives and daughters of the rural vicinage, for Messrs. Rathbone & Ritter, of Detroit.

Monsieur Laforge's farm fronted upon the northwest side of the highway, running parallel with the Detroit river about forty rods east from where it crosses the Riviere Canard over a palsied wooden drawbridge and thence in a northwesterly direction towards the main river for seven or eight acres,

until all possibility of marking its boundaries is lost amidst the tall rushes, muskrat hills and stagnant bayous of the vast marsh, which constitutes the amphibious gore of territory formed by the confluence of the two rivers. His deed called for the usual sized French lot of three *arpents* in width by thirty in length—"ninety *arpents* be the same more or less"—but not more than twenty-five acres thereof were ever at any time available for purposes of active cultivation.

The lot had been given our friend before he left the parental fold by his father, old Emanuel Laforge, a venerable and courteous, albeit illiterate, *habitant* of the old school who still lived on the family homestead some three miles up the river road in what is known as the "Petite Cote radish settlement."

The old man had bought the land in at tax sale to strengthen a somewhat shakey title by right of possession obtained from its previous occupant and when, thirteen years before the opening of this narrative, after a long drawn-out boy and girl courtship, Archange Ronseau, aged eighteen, pretty and good-tempered, had been permitted to marry Jaques Laforge before he was yet twenty, the latter had before their marriage contrived to furbish up the tumbled down premises.

He had patched up the dilapidated, long unused barn by stuffing up the open spaces twixt the logs with fresh clay, replacing the shaky hingeless doors with new ones and whitewashing the whole with a liberal coating of whitewash. The prim fowl house and diminutive adjoining woodshed he subjected to the same process of rejuvenation, and upon

the dwelling itself he exhausted whatever of ingenuity he possessed in making out of small means a nest as nearly as might be, worthy of his young life's love.

The house was of the style of architecture so common in the rural districts of Quebec.

Indeed it had been originally built by an adventurous emigrant from that province, who had been in due course forced into throwing up the sponge to malaria and mosquitoes, and selling out his squatter's rights for a nominal figure to Laforge, *pere*, had returned to the land of his nativity with sunken eye and a parched and jaundiced skin.

The building set back from the highway about half an acre, and was between twenty-five and thirty feet in length facing the same. About ten feet from either end of its steep pitched gable roof there popped up a complacent dormer window like two duely pacified and properly domesticated Jacks in boxes. With one fell swoop, as it were, this roof on the side fronting the road extended on down towards the ground sufficient to cover a veranda, which ran the full length of the building, and in point of fact the frame of the veranda was part and parcel of the main structure. The Dutch school of decoration was employed in its embellishment in that our Benedict yellow-washed the body of the building and painted the front door, window casings and banister encircling the balcony a light Prussian blue. Its foundation was not upon a rock, but upon upright cedar posts four feet high from the humid ground below with a stairway of five steps at the centre of the veranda in the front and a corresponding one at the rear side leading to a plat-

form lean-to facing the frame kitchen, which projected out of its back part like a stiff, stubby tail.

Until in later years when these upright foundation posts were hidden from view by being boarded over, a side view of the domicile suggested an obese woman, with uplifted skirts, in the act of crossing a muddy thoroughfare. For the rest, the main building, which was of hewn, chinked logs, was alike divided into two compartments upstairs and downstairs, the large frame kitchen in the rear being the dining and living room as well.

This was and is the home in the Canard settlement on the Detroit River of Jacques Laforge, whose prototype is a familiar figure in the French parishes scattered along that portion of the border of the Queen's dominions.

To this home upon the confines of the marshes, regardless of the buzz and bite of mosquitoes which at certain seasons seemed to permeate the very gases composing the atmosphere of the neighborhood, and despite the inevitable annual shakes of nauseating ague, Mons. Jacques Laforge brought his amiable young bride.

Here had his devoted wife blossomed forth and made him a father before quite eleven months had elapsed from their wedding day with its long procession of holiday vehicles and their joyous occupants, first to the church and then to the house of his wife's father, his own paternal roof and the domiciles of other sympathizing friends and relatives—all winding up by being bidden *au revoir* and Godspeed at his own threshold by an hilarious crowd of merry-makers in the wee sma' hours of the next succeeding morn.

It all seemed such a very short time ago since this auspicious event happened, and yet it was close upon fourteen years past and gone!

Until the last eighteen months the blossoming process had gone on annually with unfailing regularity, until he found himself the parent stem of a bunch of blossoms numbering nine, with two dead, when the roll was called. "Bah Gosh, de chiles come so fass at de fust of eet," Mr. Laforge was in the habit of saying, "dat's fright me. Beefor de fuss wan wus got toots on hees head, aw! hoorah bye! anuddair wan was on de craddle; an jews soon's dat wan wus use to look 'round and notteece what's go on leetle beet, aw, *voila!* dar wus nuddair wan on han fur took hees plasse. Ah'll toll you, mah fren, moss ov mah tam fur de fuss tree, four year aftaire we wus marry wus occoopy wit nussin."

Howbeit, though this was to a large extent a fact, and with that vanity common to lords of creation in respect of his capacity to perform woman's work, Jacques had gotten to think that, armed with an India rubber nipples bottle, containing a decoction of cow's milk and sugar, he could be as good as any mother to an infant, still the work upon the farm did not go unmindful of attention. With an energy begotten of an imperturbable amiability and a determined disposition to provide for growing responsibilities, he simultaneously performed the duties of acting wet-nurse and cultivator of a largely submerged marsh farm in a manner not altogether discreditable to himself.

In the former role he at least possessed the quality of supreme patience, growing at the same time, as most substitute nurses of infants are said to do, absurdly fond of the

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objects of his care and especially of little Marie his first-born; while in his efforts on the farm he was ambitious of redeeming from the sway of stagnant, verdant waters and boggy bayous, sufficient of *terra firma* to relieve his holding of its sobriquet of "Mushrat Farm" given it by certain of his cotemporary friends and acquaintances with a facetious disposition to chaff and ridicule.

To this end, after locating a fall for the water he dug a ditch east and west across the fifteen acres intervening twixt the dry cultivated land on which were the house and out-buildings and the irreclaimable marsh, which area he had succeeded in encircling with a rail fence. The following year being dry and in every way propitious for such purpose, he succeeded in breaking up this field with the plow, and planting a crop of Indian corn, which after a period of languishing yellow growth came to partial maturity and yielded a half crop of deformed and sickly looking nubbins.

Believing that this method of cultivation — this kind of hoed crop — would most rapidly and effectively bring the soil into subjection he repeated his corn planting for three or four consecutive seasons with varying success as to yield, until he bethought him that he'd sow the field with oats and seed it down with grass seed for meadow.

Meanwhile the domestic blossoms blossomed forth annually, and there was ever a recurring stranger in the home-made basswood cradle.

Marie, the first of these when a soft, brown-eyed, olive complexioned little tot just able to comfortably waddle about was ever at her father's heels in the neighboring field, the barn yard or the house.

She had undergone all the stereotyped infantile maladies and a siege of ague, through which her father had been her chief nurse and caretaker until he had grown to be the *summum bonum* of her little life.

There seemed no possibility of avoiding the annual visitations of the ague.

With each succeeding spring and wet fall every available member of the family shook the soul-sickening shake of a torpid or constipated liver. Howbeit, like puppies with the distemper, as each succeeding blossom of the household became big enough to stand a natural shake in contradistinction to an artificial one (which has an unknown quantity within the portals of this particular domestic fold), he or she was subjected to the crucible of two or three seasons' tremors which once over seemed to strengthen the child's hold upon life, rendering he or she redolent of youthful vigor.

Of his children, Mr. Laforge was in the habit of saying to his English speaking friends, "Ah'll toll you mah fren, "mah chile was all strong lac boole!

"Dey was coppair fass an reeveet bote heenside an hout-side! De ager have try hees bess fur shook dem off dees 'worl 'mais she's coo'nt do eet. Yas sair! all of dem was 'foole of laf an helt all 'cep our *pauvre petite Marie*. Ah, 'monsieur, when Ah tink of dat po' leetle creeple chile, 'dat's mac me blam meseff an Ah feels bad lac secstay."

After saying which he usually had to fumble about his pockets for a yellow bandanna pocket handkerchief, interspersed with white moons, which he perennially carried for use in such emergencies.



Little Marie's crippled condition was due to an accident which happened in the partially redeemed marsh meadow on the evening of the last day her father had wrought therein, and for this mishap he so blamed himself that he had become bitterly morbid upon the subject.

It was well on towards dark on a lowering evening in the latter part of April that Jacques had finished seeding down the fifteen acre field which had cost him so much of hard labor and so many sickening soul-warping ague shakes. He had put forth all his huge strength and capacity for work to the utmost to finish the task before the rain came, and this the overhanging clouds of portentous omen, the chirping of the myriad frogs throughout the vast marsh in every conceivable key of intonation, the deep sounding notes of the *Wahwahron* (bull frog) and the weird call of the distant loon, all went to show was not far off.

He was just finishing the last harrowing of the field when he was hailed, in a little piping voice from a little pair of lungs very much out of breath, and asked why he was stopping out there so long? Wasn't he afraid the *Loup Garou* (Banshee) or *lutins* (fairies) would catch him, that *Maw-Maw* wanted him to come in to supper right away.

He told her to come over to where he was and he'd put her on Blonde (one of the team of ponies) for a ride to the barn, and then he had proceeded to unhitch the horses from the harrow.

Poor little Marie! That run across the newly plowed field in the gloaming of that storm-threatened April evening was the last unimpeded use of her fragile young limbs she ever had.

Breathlessly she had thrown her little arms around her father's knees while he was still occupied with loosening the ponies from their work and then finishing this, amidst a volley of loving, lisping epithets and baby-talk he had taken her up in his great, strong arms and allowed her to vent her infant strength in hugging and kissing him.

Then he put her on Blonde and told her to hold fast to the harness saddle-band until he went across the field to fetch the neckyoke.

He had not got more than a hundred feet from her when Carlo the dog came bounding over the rail fence, not ten feet from the horses' heads, which so startled them in the dim, lowering twilight that they gave one bound backwards, and with a wild and frantic baby shriek, which for months afterwards never ceased its sickening echo in Jacques' grief-stricken ears, the little child lay prone upon the old fashioned wooden harrow.

The fall was accompanied by so sickening and resounding a thud followed by so awful a stillness, — the very frogs seemed hushed into silence for the instant — that an all absorbing fear took possession of the simple-minded father — a blood-curdling fear mingled with that kind of feeling the brutes must have when defending their young from danger.

He seized upon the dog who had come jumping and fawning upon him and flayed him till he howled again.

Then he went to the innocent horses and laid about them with the remnant of the whip he still clutched with a vise-like grip in his strong, right hand until they scampered off in terror to their stable.

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Left now some twenty feet from the motionless baby, lying where she had fallen in the silence of apparent death, he turned towards the tiny prostrate form and with a horror-thrilling sensation about the back of his neck and head and nausea at his stomach he tried to speak but could not.

Slowly and mechanically with tottering steps he approaches his little daughter with his left hand over his mouth as if to stop the noise of his involuntary, inward shivering.

For one instant he stands swaying like a drunken man over the unconscious child and then with a supreme effort he touches her little face and in an unearthly yelling-moan cries out, "*Oh, Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!! Elle est Morte!!*" and the strong man lay grovelling upon the earth beside the old wooden harrow riven to the heart's core as the lightening riveth the oak of the forest.



## CHAPTER III.

### *A Malediction and an Inaugural Friendly Confab.*

**J**ACQUES WAS never conscious of how he got to the house.

His first realization of his reaching there was some three hours after the occurrence, when, on the arrival of the doctor, he was induced to relinquish from his arms, where he had ever since clasped it with moaning inarticulate solicitude, the still scarcely breathing form of the injured, little child.

For days and weeks little Marie vibrated between life and death, and for days and weeks Jacques oscillated twixt regions of passive dementia and a sort of phrenzied indifference of passing events outside the little, sick one's presence.

Whenever he continued to sleep he again acted out in his dreams the terrible tragedy of the fifteen acre field until he cursed its very existence and the labor he had wrought upon it—calling Heaven to witness that it should ever remain untouched of plow or harrow so long as it continued in his possession.

Marie had fallen upon the back of her neck and head, and the spinal column had been so effected by the concussion that for weeks she hovered upon the confines of positive spinal meningitis. In any event, the doctor (who was a clever allopath) pronounced her complete recovery from the effects of the shock as out of the question. She would surely remain a cripple as long as she lived, and in this diagnosis of the case he was thus far proved entirely correct.

Gradually the poor little thing struggled back to life and consciousness again—in this regard, as it were, repeating the history of her scarcely completed babyhood, until, by dint of years of patient suffering, she grew sufficiently strong both mentally and physically to wield the sceptre of acting drudge and quasi-guardian angel to a numerous family of brothers and sisters, to say nothing of her self-condemnatory father.

The latter's sacreligious curse of the fifteen acre field made it desirable that he should sell the farm and move elsewhere to live. Now that its cultivable area, in so far as he was concerned, was permanently fixed at seven or eight acres there was very little hope of its ever outliving its facetiously amphibious name of "Mushrat Farm." The field that he had so grunted and sweated over in his efforts to rescue from the arid bogs and humid mosses of the marsh added to the black loamed, rich acres off which he had heretofore reaped such generous yields, would have entitled it to consideration as a holding available for almost any agricultural purpose and greatly enhanced its value.

But this was out of the question now.

That he should have striven so hard and suffered so much from malaria and mosquitoes during his long continued efforts to rescue the field from stagnant waters—the whole winding up with this fatal accident, the outcome of his own careless stupidity—seemed to justify his cursing the scene of his great trouble, and vowing that ever while he owned it should it remain untouched of plow or harrow.

Manifestly his proper course was to sell out and move elsewhere to live, but then where was he to find a purchaser? Who would be prepared to pay money—absolute money—

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ell out and move else- to find a purchaser? —absolute money—

for "Mushrat Farm," with its malaria, its mosquitoes, its music of the frogs and its seven or eight narrow acres available for active cultivation?

If some greenhorn from Lower Canada or foreign country, inexperienced of ague and mosquitoes and very much in want of a place to call his own, came along with a little money he perhaps might be induced to purchase; but no one with any *savoir faire* of the locality would be likely to invest his capital in "Mushrat Farm" as a place of residence and a means of livelihood.

So there seemed no alternative to his reconceiling himself to remaining where he was.

It was quite true that the farm had contributed but little, agriculturally speaking, to the maintenance of himself and his family, but as heretofore, with the marsh or submerged portion of it as a base of operations, he had but very little doubt but that in the future he would be enabled to shoot, in their proper season, sufficient ducks and other fowl for the market and secure sufficient grebe's breasts and muskrats and occasional mink skins by trapping or otherwise killing them to make up for the circumscribed limits of his agricultural operations.

Nor was this Jacques' only source of income and profitable occupation outside the product of the farm.

During five or six weeks of every autumn for several seasons past he had held the position of "*jeteur de la seine*," or foreman at one of the white-fisheries on the Detroit river situated within easy access of his home.

Of old time these fisheries were to their lessees or owners prolific means of money-getting during the catch of these



delicately delicious fish which lasted while they continued to wend their annual way up the river from the lake below to spawn, from the beginning of October to the latter part of November.

Owing, however, it is said, chiefly to the wholesale method of taking them on their feeding grounds in the lake with pond nets, so long permitted on both sides of the border, in the absence of some reciprocal and concerted action on the part of the two governments interested, the goose that lays the golden egg has gradually been being put to death for years past, until now the one time profitable industry of taking white fish on the Detroit river is a precarious and unpromising undertaking.

In addition to these means of assistance Jacques had in keeping the wolf from the door, there was occupation for his sturdy team of ponies during the winter months in the hauling of logs out of the bush to the banks of the Canard river for the local contractors and jobbers.

But none of his available sources of income had thus far yielded returns so satisfactory as had his trapping of muskrats and shooting of ducks that frequented the marshes and rivers at certain periods of each spring and fall.

With the muskrat skins, grebe's breasts and occasional mink skins he had heretofore secured, he had set up a sort of business connection with the firm of Rathbone & Ritter, who had always dealt fairly and liberally with him in taking off his hands the product of each trapping season for several years past.

It was while he was on one of these periodical visits to the store of the firm with an unusually large and fine lot of skins

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that he first met and talked with young Master Jack Rathbone, then only a boy of thirteen in jacket and Knickerbockers.

Young Rathbone was a large, well developed boy for his age, and withal a remarkably handsome lad about the face and head, which was well set on a pair of broad shoulders and covered with a thick coating of flaxen hair slightly inclined to frizzle and curl up at the ends.

While one of the clerks, an expert in the business, was busy sorting and classifying the furs Jacques had just brought in, Master Jack with a short riding whip in hand, and looking flushed from exercise came in from the street and, addressing the clerk, said: "Good morning, Mr. Lomax, is father in the office?" And then without waiting for an answer he continued, "My goodness! those are a fine lot of skins, aren't they, Mr. Lomax?"

"Yes, a pretty fair lot," answered the preoccupied clerk.

Then turning to Jacques the boy asked, "Did you catch all those animals yourself, sir?"

"Ah, yas; Ah've kotch dem all bah meseff," replied the hunter smilingly.

"Whereabouts? Up or down the river?"

"Down de riviere, Monsieur; down on de riviere Canard mash."

"Oh, is that the big marsh on the Canada side opposite Wyandotte?"

"Yas, dat's de wan."

"Well, I've always thought whenever I've passed there on a steamboat that there must be lots to hunt and shoot in

so big a marsh. I suppose there are lots of ducks down there, aren't there?"

"Ah, yas; plentay dock on de sayson—on de spreeng an fall tam."

"Anything else?" enquired this incipient Nimrod.

"Well, yas; dare was plentay ploovoir and snaps moss all de tam," replied the Frenchman, "but me, Ah doan care nutting 'bout dat; dey wus not wort shootin."

"What!" cried the boy in amazement, "snipe and plover not worth shooting! Well, I should remark that's a funny thing to say! Why, I'd rather have one golden plover or jack snipe than any six old fish ducks that ever flew!"

"But" remonstrated Jacques, "dey wus not all feesh dock what we's got down on de *riviere Canard* mash *par exemple*! We's got black dock, grey dock an teels moss all de tam, cos dey breeds on de mash; an on de sayson we's got blue beel, an *cou 'rouge* an canvas back an ——"

"Canvas back!" interrupted the boy enthusiastically, "are you sure that you've got the genuine, sure enough canvas back, sir?"

"Aw, yas, am sure," responded the Frenchman nodding his head confidently.

"Did you ever shoot any genuine canvas back? Mind you, red necks look a great deal like canvas back, only they are a great deal smaller, you know."

"Aw, yas," replied the Canadian, smiling; "Ah knows de deeferance baytween de red neck and de canvas back. De red necks, what we calls *cou rouge* een French, wus kin of dock vary common; *mais* de canvas back *par exemple* was hard to fine an hard to shoot, too."

"Oh, yes, I suppose they're hard to shoot, and I know they fetch a big price. Why, they say they sometimes pay as high as five and even ten dollars a pair for them in the New York market."

"Aw, no! ten dollair fur wan pairs ov dock!" exclaimed the Frenchman incredulously, "dat was too moch. Ah guess you wus meestock, Monsieur."

"Oh, no, I'm not mistaken," persisted the boy, "I saw it mentioned as a fact in one of the papers."

"Well, maybeso," said Jacques, doubtfully shrugging his shoulders; "Ah knows dat dare wus plentay reech folks down on New York *mais* ten dollair wus too much fur wan pairs ov dock! Why, mah fren," continued Jacques oracularly, "lass fall Ah have feel moss lac a teef acose Ah've ax sich beeg prasse fur seven canvas back dock dat Ah wus lucky nuff to shoot on wan day! De folks what keep de Greeswold House on de ceety here have geeve me ten dollaire fur dem seven canvas back dock sure's Ah'm spoke to you here now!"

"Oh, yes," replied the youth approvingly, "I've no doubt they did."

"But you know," replied Jacques, "Ah have jews ax dem ten dollair fur fun to start wit. You see dare wus two tree udder mans dare what wus ankchus for got dem; an soon's Ah have ax dat ten dollair, de mans from de hotel pool two fahve dollair beel hout of hees pockette an han dem to me an goes off lac he was varah mouch please," and Mr. Laforge smiled audibly.

"Yes, and I have no doubt he was," replied the boy. "Why, I'd give anything I had in the world to kill a can-

vas back! I'd have him stuffed and keep him as a curiosity, you know." And confidentially contiguating he said: "You know my father imported a lovely Westley Richards double barrel breech loader for me. You ought to see it! She's a beauty! Weighs only six pounds, is twenty-six inches in the barrels and number ten gauge; and if mother didn't make such a fuss every time I go off alone with it lest I might shoot myself, I'm sure I'd have shot a canvas back by this time if there's one at all to be found in the country."

"Well," said Jacques, amused with the boy's enthusiasm, "Ah'll toll you what you goan do; geet yo faddeur an muddeur t'allow you to come down wit me on mah plasse an Ah goan took good care ov you an not let you shoot yoseff, an we'll see eef dare was no canvas back on de contray ou no! Not now, of course, acose dees was not on de sayson fur dock; *mais* nex fall, you know."

"And will you be sure to take me with you," exclaimed the boy eagerly, "if I get mother's consent, because father does not care how often I go shooting now."

"Aw, yas, fur sure Ah weel!" assented Jacques.

"By Jiminy! that will be jolly, won't it? And do you live in the marsh, sir?"

"Oh, no," replied the Frenchman somewhat disconcerted at the bear thought of his living absolutely in the marsh like a bull frog or a muskrat. "Oh, no, Ah doan leef right een de mash, you know *mais* jews long side you know. De mash ees on part of mah farm which have hees front part on de riviere road you know."

"Oh, yes, I see you don't live in the marsh but just along

side of it. That's jolly! and what is your name please sir?"

"Mah nam?"

"Yes."

"Mah nam was Jean Jacques Laforge, but moss of de folks calls me Jock."

"Mr. Jock Laforge! Well you know Mr. Jock" continued the lad confidentially, "My name is John Rathbone, but most people, in fact everybody except father when he's cross, calls me Jack and I'd far rather be called Jack too! Jack Rathbone doesn't sound half so stiff and unfriendly as John Rathbone! You know I'm the only son of Mr. Robert Rathbone the head partner in this store."

"Aw, an you was de son of Monsieur Rathbone! Well, Monsieur Jack, Ah was glad for mak acquaint wit you" and he held out his hand and greeted the senior partner's only son with a hearty shake.

"I suppose you are a French Canadian, aren't you, Mr. Laforge?" queried the boy.

"Aw, yes, Ah was what you call *un Canadien Francais* Mah faddeur's gran-faddeur was wan of de fuss settleur on dees riviere."

"Yes, well then he must have known my mother's grandfather, because you know he was a French Canadian and one of the first settlers on Detroit river too."

"Yas! ees dat a fac? Well, well! dat's sureprise me. What was de nam of you muddeur befor she have marry wit yo faddeur?"

"My mother's name before she was married?"

"Yas," replied Jack.

"Her name was La Tourneau — daughter of Mr. Edward La Tourneau, who used to keep store here in the city a long time ago. He is dead now you know."

"Aw, yas, yas, yas," responded the Canadian gradually elevating his voice, "she was de datteur of Monsieur Edwar La Tourneau, de ole Merchan what have be dead long tam now! Yas, Yas, Ah remembraire heem an where he was use to keep store near de markette. Aw, well! she was wan of us peuple! she was French Canadien too, ain't she?"

"Oh, yes, she is a French Canadian by descent, you know," assented the lad doubtfully.

"Ho, O, Ho, O," replied Jock musingly, "Ah nevaire know dat beefore! Madame Rathbone was French Canadien too ay?"

"By decent you know," interpolated the youth with young American pride and remonstrance.

"Bah deescen!" enquired Jock as if in a quandary, "bah, deescen! what's mean dat Monsieur Jack?"

"Coming down you know," explained the boy. "Coming down — descending you know."

"Comin down from de French Canadien!" exclaimed Jock laughingly. "Well Ah coo'n't see how she's come down! Moss of us *Canadien Francais* was pore lac de tuckey of Job an she was reech lac Preencess! Ah guess she mus have come up from us French Canadiens! She's not come down dat's sure thing! ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed again at his own joke.

"Well," said the senior partner's heir as if to finally dispose of the question of whether his mother came up or

came down from the French Canadian race, "she can talk French any way."

"Aw yas," assented the Canadian approvingly, "Ah suepose so! All ov us Canadien ken talk French you know! Dat wus hour laungage."

"Yes and you can ask her in French to let me go shooting with you, can't you Mr. Jock?" queried the youth eagerly.

"Ah, yas, Ah suepose Ah could do dat," assented Jock doubtfully.

"And I know she'd let me go if you asked her in French Mr. Jock," exclaimed the boy with enthusiasm.

"May be so, may be so," abstractedly observed Jock awed by the contemplation of interviewing so grand a lady as the rich Mrs. Rathbone must be. "May be so."

"By Jimminy!" exclaimed the lad demonstratively striking the side of his right leg with his riding whip, "if I had only driven down in my pony cart this morning instead of riding down on horseback, I should have driven you up to the house right off now and introduced you to mother. I know she'd be awfully glad to see you Mr. Jock."

"Aw, no, no, some udder tam, some udder tam," nervously responded Jock.

"Some other time," repeated the boy, "when will that be? how long will it be before the duck shooting season commences?"

"Bout tree mons from de present tam."

"That will be about the 1st of September, won't it, Mr. Laforge?"



"Yas, dat's when she's beegin de sayson."

"Well now," said the lad starting up, "I must go and deliver a message to father. So I'll say good-by for the present, sir," extending his hand to the Canadian. "But you mustn't forget your promise to take me shooting with you, you know, Mr. Laforge."

"Oh no, Ah not goan to forgeet dat! You need not be scare of dat! Ah goan come an got you," said Jock shaking hands with the boy.

"Mind," said the lad smilingly as he retreated backwards towards the inner office. "I'll be on the lookout for you here at the store from the 1st of September right on every day until you put in an appearance. Mind you that Mr. Laforge," and he playfully shook his finger at Jock as he turned to face the entrance to the counting room.

"All raght Monsieur Jack! all raght! Ah goan be here some tam bout de fuss week on Septambaire eef Ah leef at dat tam, sure ting!"

And so in due course when the first week in September came about Jacques put in an appearance at the store where he found that Master Rathbone had been patiently awaiting him for several hours each day for several days previous to his coming.

After much persuasion the enthusiastic young sportsman induced the shy Canadian to drive up with him to the Rathbone mansion where in much trepidation and awe of the luxurious surroundings, he was introduced to Mrs. Rathbone, *mere*.

She was a petite brunette, slightly on the shady side of forty, with an easy grace and pretty little Frenchy manner,

and not yet bereft of charms which twenty years previously must have made her very attractive.

She talked French in a charmingly familiar way to Jacques; questioned him interestedly about his family and talked so affectionately, not to say confidentially, about her only son and two daughters that the owner of Mushrat farm was amazed to find how comfortable and at his ease he felt. She made him take a glass of wine and wanted to know whether after his long drive he didn't feel hungry; if so, she would have him something to eat gotten at once; but all these proffers of hospitality he politely and gratefully declined.

After repeated stipulations as to the safety of her manifestly idolized boy she consented to allow him to accompany Jacques back to his home on the Riviere Canard for two or three days' shooting, and although from this expedition there was not evolved any canvass back ducks, howbeit it established an acquaintance which had ripened into a genuinely sincere and earnest friendship between the simple-minded *habitant* hunter and the prococious city youth at the outset of the period of this veracious history.

Meanwhile little Marie, though a confirmed cripple, had sufficiently recovered from the effects of the accident, which befell her in the partially rescued marsh field, in the gloaming of that lowering April evening, to use her still baby-like fingers in the profitable braiding of straw for the firm of Rathbone & Ritter.

The child seemed inspired with a preternatural industry and imbued with an eager desire to make her crippled condition as little burdensome to her parents as possible.

While the fifteen acre field itself, as if blighted by her father's malediction, notwithstanding all the tedious labor it had cost its owner, soon reverted back to its original condition—the blighting sway of stagnant, verdant marsh waters and the dead and dying things therein contained.

Thus the *partere* of Monsieur Jacques Laforge on the confines of the Riviere Canard marsh was inevitably relegated back to its seven or eight acres of cultivable area, and therefore, confirmed in the possession of its amphibious sobriquet of "Mushrat Farm."

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## CHAPTER IV.

*A Delightful Place to Live and Keep House in.—A Mixed Marriage.*

WITH ITS vast frontage upon St. Lawrence's mighty waterway to the sea (at that point upon it which has been aptly called the Bosphorus of America) its wide and cleanly streets, its imposing public buildings and business blocks, its luxuriously artistic villas, its island park and its ornate environs generally, how beautiful a city is Detroit, the metropolis of the state of Michigan!

Given the wherewithal to do so, surely no city on this continent, or, for that matter, any other continent, offers surroundings more agreeably propitious to sojourn in or "live and keep house in" in these utilitarian days than does the City of the Straits.

Albeit the citizen of enquiring mind or the student of topography must perforce climb to the summit of that preternatural promintory, the city hall tower, to get his bearings or accurately understand on what particular point on God's footstool he lives and has his being—when he does attain to that inevitable municipal apex he is well repaid for his pains.

From this elevated point of observation on a clear day he discovers that he is in the center of a huge cyclorama of flood and field with magnificent monuments of labor, and every other evidence of busy life and industry in the fore-

ground, while the azure tinted horizon on all sides forms the background to one of nature and art's imposing pictures of a valley of plenty.

During the season of navigation the majestic river presents an ever shifting scene of activity in its moving craft of every description, from the graceful pleasure yacht and midget sail boat to the grandly dignified grain or ore laden steamship as she glides upon her devious way down the current of the mighty river towards the sea, to return with coal or merchandise for the dwellers in the great Northwest.

Stretching out from amidst the miles of wharves, warehouses and manufactories along the border of the river, across the imposing parallel thoroughfares, the broad well built streets like so many life-giving arteries in a healthful human body radiate and ramify to the north and west across a net work of centering railways until they lose themselves in green fields and variegated gardens in the remote outskirts of the model city.

Across the river in the Queen's dominions, less than three quarters of a mile away, is the thriving town of Windsor over which the eye sweeps southward across the well-tilled fields and verdant pastures of the thickly populated peninsula which constitutes the southernmost land's end of Canada and which buries its pedal-like prow in the purple haze of Lake Erie's cloud kissed waters in the far distant blue horizon.

To Detroit is accredited somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, "be the same more or less," while Windsor slowly but surely

struggles on with considerably less than one twentieth that number.

Why this difference should exist is not within the province of this humble pencil at this time to attempt to elaborate. Suffice it to say that it does exist and that very much the same disparity in favor of the American side is observable wherever towns and cities have grown up opposite each other throughout the long drawn out proximate borders of the two countries.

As a natural sequence to this state of things the prices of land in these localities are respectively proportionately the same, and it has been said that much of the annexation feeling which exists along the Canadian frontier is ascribable to an utilitarian setting aside of all sentiment of loyalty to British rule in favor of a worship of Mammon and a hankering for the flesh pots of Egypt.

It may safely be assumed however, that the existence of this feeling to any noticeable extent is largely confined to the speculative land owner, and general public opinion would have to undergo a radical change from its present condition upon the subject ere an amicable union of the two countries of any sort could be brought within the range of near probability.

However this may be, if Detroit be the great and growing metropolis it is at the present writing, it was but little better than a village hamlet by comparison when in the autumn of 1837 Robert Rathbone, Jack's father, found his way thither from Plymouth, England, in search of fortune.

He landed in the incipient city at a time when it was being made to some extent the base of operations of the

so-called "patriots" in the prosecution of their war upon British rule in Canada, under the leadership of that advanced thinker and statesman, not to say benefactor to his country, the late William Lyon Mackenzie.

Finding the town in an abnormal state of excitement growing out of its position as the seat of this filibustering warfare with a corresponding liveliness in its business circles, Mr. Rathbone, unmarried, with a good address and a fair knowledge of book-keeping, found no difficulty in securing a situation as clerk and man of all work in a leading general store doing a large business in the furnishing of supplies to traders and trappers along the chain of upper lakes, for which furs and fish were received in exchange.

Continuing in this employ for some half dozen years to the satisfaction of all concerned, this frugal and methodical young Englishman became thoroughly conversant with the general trade of the locality and especially *au fait* in the sorting and selection of furs of every description.

This expert knowledge he was in due course enabled to put to his own permanently profitable use; for, in common with a very large proportion of native born middle class Englishmen who find their way to this side of the Atlantic, Mr. Rathbone had expectations which were shortly to be realized.

The death of an ancient maiden aunt soon placed him in possession of a thousand pounds, and with this capital added to his own savings he was enabled to start business on his own account on a very respectable basis.

Taking into partnership with him George Ritter, a practical German furrier, he opened an establishment in modest

premises on one of the then chief thoroughfares of the little city, and thus was founded, upon what time has proved an enduring basis, the important and now wealthy firm of Rathbone & Ritter, wholesale and retail dealers in furs, hats, caps and straw-braid goods.

Having successfully launched this business firm, the senior member thereof bethought him that a matrimonial partnership would now be in order, and casting about him for the desired partner he picked upon Miss Emily La Tourneau, the daughter of a merchant doing business in a small way in the city.

The course of true love in this instance was unproverbially smooth.

Everything was propitious and plain, and prosaic sailing the order of the day.

Mr. Robert Rathbone, aged thirty-two, unmistakably good-looking, of steady habits and the head of a prosperous business house, wanted a wife.

Miss Emily La Tourneau, a maiden fair, aged twenty-four, if not absolutely heart whole or fancy free, for certain specious reasons, at all events just at this time, prepared to accept the first proffer of an eligible husband.

They met!

They exchanged assurances of mutual love and admiration!

They became engaged in the respectable conventional fashion of the time.

They married, and *violá ce tout!*

It was not altogether what is generally accepted as an *une marriage de convenance*, but it was what may be called a first cousin to it.



It was a mixed marriage.

He was a *laissez faire* sort of Church of England Protestant, while she was an actively observant Catholic.

But then that did not matter.

These kind of alliances, because of the denominational peculiarities of the early French settlers along the Detroit river, were of common occurrence on both sides of the border in these early days.

Nor did the religious discrepancy in these matrimonial partnerships confine itself to their senior members—the father and mother.

It was handed down to the sons and daughters—it being the commonly accepted custom that the former should follow their father to his Protestant church, while the girls were trained up in the Roman Catholic faith of their mother.

Thus it came about that the two daughters of Robert and Emily Rathbone were Catholics, while their only son, owing to the indifferentism and religious lapses of his paternal parent, was practically like the sinner who slipped between two chairs.

The boy was made to go to church every Sunday, too frequently of late without his father's escort, and beyond this outward observance, from a psychological point of view, he had been allowed to grow up after the manner of Topsy.

As to his secular education, he was not so far behind though not by any means all that he ought to have been and probably would have been had he been the offspring of parents professing one common faith. He had passed creditably through the public school of the city, and for the previous two years to the opening of this story, in a perfunctory sort

of way had attended the class of a private tutor, one Mr. Hamilton, a pedagogue of the Dominie Sampson type.

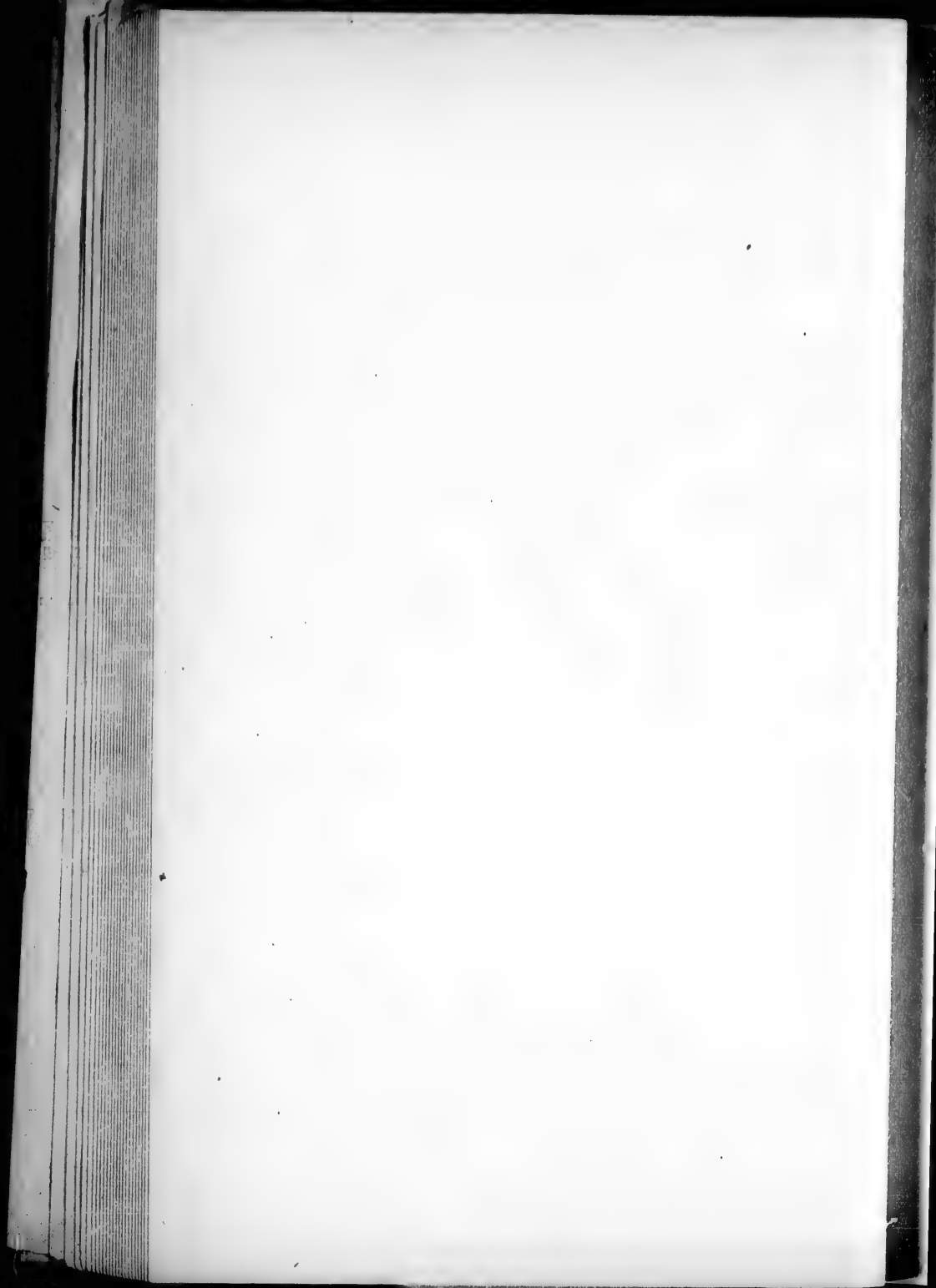
Master Rathbone was a tall, robust and muscular, brown eyed and light haired youth, with good features and a firm set mouth, looking more like a young man of twenty than a boy of eighteen as he actually was when first introduced to the reader.

He was athletically inclined, a patron of the gymnasium and a votary of any game or contest in which there was any genuine sport.

Under Jacques Laforge's tuition he had become an expert with the gun, and incidentally to his frequent expeditions to the Riviere Canard had gotten to be passionately fond of witnessing the grotesque trotting and pacing races frequently held among the French in that neighborhood and other localities up and down the shores of lake and river.

In the winter months it was very rarely that a French race took place on the river Rouge below the city or anywhere within hailing distance on the Canadian side of the main river that Jack Rathbone and his grey pony were not found among the crowd attending the same.

He knew the style of gait and had a pretty fair knowledge of the speed capacity of almost every reputedly fast French pony for miles around the beautiful city of the Straits — the home of his nativity.



## CHAPTER V.

### *A Brush for the Lead.*

**W**ITH Peter Bertrand, of Belle River, owner of a speedy chestnut pacing pony, Jack Rathbone was on especially intimate terms.

Peter was a native of the Province of Quebec, from whence he had been imported years ago by a "jobber" in square timber for whom he had worked in the getting out of oak and black walnut along the Canadian shore for the Quebec market.

In this employment Mons. Bertrand had saved sufficient to purchase a farm near to the village of Belle River on the shore of Lake St. Clair, some eighteen miles east of Detroit on the Canadian side, and on this he now lived with his family, consisting of a wife and a numerous tribe of progeny.

Of late years he had had frequent dealings with the firm of Rathbone & Ritter in the article of straw braid of which he not only sold them all produced by his own household but also bought on commission for them all he could contrive to pick up from among his neighbors.

In this way Monsieur Bertrand had gotten to be well known to the firm and its employes, and incidentally had established a friendship with the sportive only son of the senior partner, whom he had first met at the store, and sub-

sequently at frequent *habitant* horse races on the Canadian side.

Peter was a tall man, and as straight as the proverbial arrow, slightly pock-marked, with pleasing grey eyes and good features.

He wore a well trimmed moustache which blended into a pair of cheek whiskers, giving him a not unmilitary or unmartial like appearance.

Being about fifty-five years of age, his brown hair was somewhat streaked with grey. In the winter he usually wore a plucked otter cap with a peak, and a long, ulster overcoat of home-made cloth, which was encircled about the middle with the inevitable *habitant* red sash.

Monsieur Bertrand was one of a kind commonly met with among the French Canadians, who, notwithstanding his constant intercourse with English speaking people, never contrived to learn to speak the language fluently.

When he did speak it, as of course he was constantly obliged to do, he did so with a very marked accent in a deliberate, jerky style of utterance, and in total ignorance of the complex letters *th*, that great stumbling block to the French Canadian learner of the Queen's English.

During the week following the Christmas holidays, immediately preceding the opening of this narrative, M. Peter Bertrand had business at the store of Rathbone & Ritter, and on that occasion met Jack Rathbone, who happened to come in while he was there.

"Hello, Monsieur Rathbone," cried Peter with outstretched right hand, "glad to see you! Ah wus jews ax de folks here where you wus."

"Ah, Mr. Bertrand, how de do," replied Jack, shaking hands cordially. He always called Peter Mr. Bertrand when he chanced to meet him in the store. That was Peter's dress parade name, as it were. A way from the store, their friendship and Peter's guilelessness of manner seemed to warrant Jack's addressing him by his Christian name—and Peter it usually was, notwithstanding the disparity 'twixt their respective years.

"Ah hopes you wus goan anjye many 'appay rayturn ov de sayson Monsieur Jack," said Peter with hearty deliberation.

"Thank you, Mr. Bertrand," responded Jack equally heartily. "I hope that you'll live to see many, many happy returns of the New Year."

"Aw well, fur me you see Ah can't espec fur have mouch more year you know, *mais* so long as Ah kin Ah was goan have good tam."

"Certainly, that's right! As big, and fine, and healthy a looking man as you are ought to have a great many happy years in store for him yet. More particularly as you seem to take so much pleasure out of life. By the way, talking of pleasure, how is your chestnut colt getting on this winter?"

"Come over dees way wit me," said Peter in a mysterious stage whisper, and they went up to the far end of the long store and leaned up against the end of the counter."

"Ah'll toll you Monsieur Jack," mysteriously whispered Peter, "Dat leetle chesnut colt wus flyeur! Ah'll toll you, mah fren, he was flyeur! *Sure ting* he was flyeur!"

"Yes," responded the youth smilingly, "I'm glad to hear that. He was very speedy when I saw him up at the track last fall, and I suppose he has improved very much on the ice this winter."

"You jews bet yo laf he have amprove dees wintaire," replied Peter with frequent slow and deliberate nods of his jockey looking cap. "Ah guess he muss be all ov tirtay seconde fasser now on de hice dan he have be when you have see heem up at de track lass fall."

"Indeed! Well, I thought he moved like a future fast one then, and I'm glad to know that I was not mistaken."

"Nosirree, you was not meestook, Monsieur Jack," slowly articulated Peter with the same, slow confirmatory nods of his head. "He wus flyeur, Ah'll toll you he was flyeur!" And after a short, ratifying pause of silence during which, with closely compressed lips, he gazed down into the eyes of his young companion in solemn seriousness, lowering his voice still more as he edged up towards Jack, he asked "Deed you hear bout de race Ah was goan have wit de ole 'Crapaud' of de Widday Martin?"

"No, when is it to come off?" queried Jack in surprise.

"Two week from nex Sateurday," whispered Peter.

"Two weeks from next Saturday! whereabouts?"

"On de hice on de lac shore oposight wheres de widday, she's keep tavern you know," this very much *soto voce*.

"Why that must be near the mouth of Belle river then."

"Yes, dat's de plasse," assented Peter, "jews wheres de Belle Riviere pass on de lac you know."

"Well, but surely," observed Jack, "your colt must have improved very much to justify you in tackling Crapaud."

"Amprove! You bet yo laf he have amprove! Ah nevaire see no kine ov horse amprove so fass in mah laf beefore," and Mr. Bertrand, with compressed lips, again gazed down into Jack's eyes in serious and impressive silence, which after a pause of an instant was broken by the latters saying: "Well of course you know Peter that you have my best wishes and I hope with all my heart that you'll win the race, but Crapaud has a big reputation, and I have seen him win several very fast heats."

"Aw yes," said Peter, with repeated nods of assent, "Ah knows all dat. Ah wus perfeclay well acquaint wit dat. Ah knows dat de ole Crapaud hees carry de broom now, *mais* you see eef dat leetle chesnut doan geeve heem pooty tuff poole fur dat broom two week from nex Sateurday."

"Well I sincerely hope so," said Jack doubtfully, "but how did you come to make the match?"

"Well you see eet wus jews lack dees," replied Peter taking off his skull cap and wiping his neck and low broad forehead with a red bandanna pocket handkerchief, "on de day beefore New Year, what you call New Year Eve, Ah wus come down to de town fur bah sum *boison* an udder freshment lac dat fur New Year day. You know dat wus beeg day mongst us French folks."

"Yes," assented Jack, "and I like your jolly, old fashioned way of celebrating it too."

"Well you see, Ah have see de Widday Martin on de street on Winsorr."

"She wus foot, and I wus foot too, 'cos Ah have put mah ponay on de barn, an Ah bow to heur an she's bow to me



verrah polite, lac she's always do, an Ah nevaire taught nutting more bout de widday.

"An so pootay soon Ah have feeneesh all mah beesness on de town, got all mah grocaray, an *boison*, an all what Ah wants, an den Ah wus to heetch up an start fur home slowlay, cos Ah wus drav de leetle chesnut an I don't want poosh heem cos de road wus not verrah good nigh de town," here Mr. Bertrand paused while he replaced his otter cap upon his head, and restored the red bandanna to its wonted pocket. Then, in detached sentences with a slight pause between each he continued, "Well jews as Ah have reech de udder end of de *Grande Côte*, dees side of de mout of *Petite Riviere*, Ah wus to take de hice, cos she's fuss class from dare long de lac shore to wheres Ah leev.

"Jews as Ah wus to turn fur took de hice, Ah heerd some bell behine me an Ah looks 'roun, an dare wus de Widday Martin all bah she's self lone, dravin de ole Crapaud on de cutteur.

"'Hallo Pierro!' she's call hout to me, (een French of course, you know).

"'Ah wus hope Ah was goan kotch you.' she say.

"'All raght Meeses Ah say 'Eet wus heasy ting fur kotch me Ah guess.'

"'No,' she say, 'dey tells me dat colt of yourn wus amprove verrah fass latelay.'

"'Well,' Ah say, 'prhaps he have amprove leetle beet, *mais* Ah doan know,' an Ah wus to shuv hup mah shouleurlac dat you know as eef I wus een doubt bout dat!

"'Hole on,' she's cree hout, 'Ah goan geeve you brush presentlay.'

"'Oh' Ah say, 'you goan brush bah me whenever you wus mine to Ah guess.'

"*Mais* she's doan say nutting more, an pootay soon we wus to strike de good hice an den she's come up long side an challenge me fur brush wit heur.

"'Well all raght,' Ah say, 'Ah goan see eef Ah kin keep hanywares nigh you.'

"'You start fuss Madame,' Ah say, an Ah have poole out to geeve heur de bess track, what Ah was occooppy up to dat tam.

"That was being properly polite to a lady," interpolated Jack.

"Ah yas, Ah hopes Ah nevaire wus goan forgot mah poleettess to de layday, you know.

"Well, when Ah've *affaire* de widday de bess track an poole hout fur let heur come hup long side me, she say, 'Aw nevaire mine fur de track, Ah goan took dat *affaire* awhile..'

"'Jews as you wus a mine to Madame,' Ah say, an Ah bows to heur varrah pollee, 'eef you doan want took de good track all raght, Ah goan keep eet meseff,' an at same tam Ah wus say to meseff, 'Now mah good widday womans eef you tink you wus goan took dees track from me hany tam you wus mine to, eef dees ponay what Ah have got on dees cutteur was jews as fass as Ah tink he wus to-day, Ah bleeve you wus goan be pootay mouch meestook, Madame!'

"An so we wus to start.

"Aw well, at de fust ov eet mah pony was ancline fur acc a leetle bad.

"You see he wus feelin pootay good an he wus pinte tourds home, you know, an he wus want to go too fass fur hees foots, so Ah have pootay hard tam fur hole heem down to hees work fur de fuss half mile, an de ole womans she's gain on me leetle beet.

"*Mais* atteur dat Ah have got mah leetle feller down to hees work, an den de fun's beegen!

"Ah well, de widday she's baycome excite now. Ah'll toll you she was excite!" and Mr. Bertrand looking down at the floor here paused for an instant to emphasize the widow's excitement on the occasion by silently and slowly nodding his head repeatedly with compressed, firm set lips.

"Presentlay," continued Peter, rousing up, "we have struck good wide piece of hice what wus jews so smoot lack glass, an Ah suepose de widday she's say to heurseff, 'Now Ah guess Ah goan leeve heem behine,' an so she's make brush for de leed an I have let heur pootay nigh got bah me.

"Den Ah jews heasy up on mah lan leetle beet, an bah gosh! you otter see dat leetle feller got down to hees work.

"Well, Monsieur Jack, you could bleeve me *ou* no, jews as you wus mine to, but pon mah wurd he's fairly fly!

"Eef he wus have reglar wing he coo'nt fly no fasser!

"Bah George, Ah nevaire wus ride so fass een all mah laf beefore!" and Mr. Bertrand again paused, and with firmly compressed lips gazed down into Jack's face with rigid countenance.

Then starting up he resumed, "An so Ah wus go so fass and leeve de ole Crapaud an de widday behine so queeck, Ah jews leff de leetle feller broke an leeve hees foots so's she was goan tink eet was honly bah acceedent he wus go so fass fur dat tam, you know." And here the owner of the chestnut "flyeur" winked voluminously at his youthful and sympathetic auditor.

"An beefore Ah could got de leetle feller down to hees work agin de ole womans wus hup long side me, an ole Crapaud wus actin fuss class.

"So we goes long fur more's half a mile side an side.

"Den de widday wus ankshus fur got by and she beegene to poosh on de lan, an poosh on de lan," here Peter held up his hands and arms and threw himself in an attitude in imitation of the widow's driving, "An poosh on de lan! an holler, an yell loud's she coo'nt!

"An den Ah beegene to heasy hup on mah lan, an holler an yell pootay good too.

"An we wus go fass" and Peter here allowed his arms and hands to drop down limp on either side of his commanding form, "An poosh on de lan," he repeated bowing his head forward and back slowly with each repetition, "an poosh on de lan, an go fass, bah gosh! We wus go fass!

"Pootay soon ole Crapaud's broked an leeve hees foots.

"Den de widday she's git mad. She *wus* mad! Ah could see she wus mad clean trough when she wus drop behine.

"She's stan up on de cutteur an wheep de ole horse—lash heem hard's she coo'nt.

"Bah gosh, she wus mad!

"An so when Ah have see dat Ah wus to slow up, an she's

come long side agin, an Crapaud wus actin verrah well an she wus try to go pass me, but no sair, she's coo'nt do dat!

"An so we pace long side an side unteel we come to de plasse wheres you turn up to go to Lemay's, de half ways house, an Ah have stop dare an de widday she's go on hup long de lac shore tourds home," and Mr. Bertrand while he paused, again uncovered his head, and producing the red bandanna proceeded to wipe the inside sweat band of his conspicuous cap.

"So you think you were too much for Crapaud and the Widow Martin that day do you?" asked Jack laughingly.

"Ah doan tink so, Ah knows so," replied Peter with confidence, as he slowly restored his cap and handkerchief to their respective places.

"Well, but you haven't told me how you came to make the match," suggested Jack.

"Aw, yas; Ah wus goan toll you dat," replied Peter, as he straightened himself up to his full height.

"Well, Ah have stop at Lemay's bout wan hour, Ah guess—have tree four dreenk wit de byes, you know—New Year tam you know.

"Den Ah have geeve tree four swallow ov wateur to de ponay an start hup tourds home.

"When Ah have got oposight de tavern ov de widday, jews beefore you come to de veellage, Ah have taught Ah would go een an spent a quartair wit heur an see how she's feel affair our brush togedder.

"So Ah've stop an tie an covaire up de ponay and go een.

"When Ah wus arrive on de eenside ov de bar, Ah fine

eet wus foole ov all kine of folks an a good many ov dem wus pootay much on de weevin way too.

"Ah suepose acose eet wus goan to be New Year's tomorrow, you know.

"Lots ov mah nabor wus mongst de crowd, an Ah've ax all ov dem, evary wan what wus on de room, fur have a dreenk wit me, an so, jews as we wus to took dat dreenk, de widday she's come een from de back room. 'Well, Pierro,' she say, 'Ah suepose you wus feel pootay good acose you have hole so well wit me an Crapaud, dees aftairenoon; but you need not to got drunk ovaire dat,' she say.

"Well sair, dat's mac me mad, Monsieur, dat's mac me mad cleen trough! An Ah say; 'No, Madame, Ah wus not goan got drunk bout sich leetle ting lac dat, Ah wus jews come on yo house fur spent two, tree shillin an Ah wus not espec dat Ah wus goan be ansulte bah de laday ov dat house.'

"'Oh, no,' she say, 'you muss excoose me, Ah wus only tink you wus feel leetle too good cos ole Crapaud have not leeve you furdeur behine dees aftairenoon.'

"'Madame.' Ah say, 'yo ole creeple nevaire see de day he could leeve behine dat leetle chesnut ponay Ah've got tie to de poss houtside.'

"Well, sair, dat's mac de widday mad, Ah'll toll you!

"Heur fass wus got pale lac sheet an she say, varrah slowlay, wit tremble on heur vice, lac she wus try fur to keep sumting down dat wus bylin hup heenside ov heur, you know.

"'Well, Monsieur Pierro Bertrand,' she say, 'Ah jews toll you what Ah weel do wit dat ole creeple, as you calls

heem. Ah weel geeve you ten dollaire ef you wants to bet me twentay dollair dat you kin beet dat ole creeple wit dat chestnut plug ov yourn, mile heet, on de hice, tree week frum nex Satureday!' and den she have turn roun to de crowd an say, 'dat's de way Ah talks to folks dat calls mah horse creeple.'

" 'Well, Madame Martin,' Ah say, 'Ah doan tink dare wus hany use fur you to got yo back up lac dat.'

" 'You have ansulte me fust, an Ah have not ansulte you!'

" 'Ah have onlay call yo ole horse Crapaud wan creeple, an Ah guess Ah wus not fur wrong needer.'

"Den she say een loud vice, an stomp heur foot on de fleur, an shook heur head an arm:

" 'Hany mans what ansulte mah horse Crapaud ansulte me too, an Ah goan mac heem put up *ou* shut up sure ting!' An when she have say datsome ov de crowd was cry, 'shame fur me fur ansulte a widday womans lac dat.'

"Well, bah gosh! Ah have got mad den!

"Ah wus fightin mad! An so Ah tooked hoff mah ovair-coat an lay heem down on de conetaire, an Ah say, an Ah have haddress evary wan on de compagnie: 'Ah have come on dees house lac a peecefool ceetezan, lac Ah wus always try to be, an de fuss ting Ah knows de layday of de house ansulte me. *Mais*, Ah doan ansulte heur on rayturne for dat.

" 'Ah onlay say heur ole horse Crapaud wus wan creeple; an now Ah say furdeur dan dat, Ah kin prove hee's creeple, an eef hany mans on dees room would lac to took dat up, come right long an Ah goan try to geeve heem hees bellay fool of sateesfaction.'

"*Mais* noboday wus to answer dat *par exemple*!

"'Now, Madame,' Ah say, haddressin de widday, 'you have say jewst now dat you would be willin to geeve me ten dollair eef Ah would bet you twentay dollair dat Ah coold beat yo ole horse wit mah leetle chesnut plug.'

"'Yas,' she say, 'an Ah say dat agin.'

"'Well, Madam,' Ah say, 'Ah doan want fur took no advantage ov you.

"'Ah doan want yo monnah unless Ah weens eet fair an honess lac a genseeman, lac Ah hopes Ah wus always goan be, an so Ah'll toll you what Ah weel do wit you.

"'Ah weel bet you twenty-fahve dollair heven, and poot de monnah hup on han ov Ephraham Parent here, raght hoff, dat mah leetle chesnut plug kin beat yo great Crapaud on de hice hanywares you wus mine to tree week from nex Sateurday.'

"An so de widday she's look seurprise at dat proposeeshun, but she say dat wus greeble to heur, provide de race wus to come hoff on de lac shore opposight heur tavarne.

"'Aw, well, madame,' Ah say, 'Ah doan care wheres de race come hoff; Ah'm weelling eef we goes on de meedle of de lac to pace! Eet wus all de sam fur me.'

"An so de widday she's go back on de back part ov de house an pootay soon she's come back agin wit twenty-fahve dollair an poot heem hup on han ov Ephraham Parent, an so Ah have pool hout mah *porte-monnaie* an count hout twenty-fahve dollair an covair eet, an dat wus de way de race wus mac hup."

"Mile heats, ay?" queried Jack.

"Yas, mile heet, bess tree on fahve," replied Peter.



"And I suppose there's a good deal of bitter feeling about the race, isn't there, Peter?"

"Oh, no; fur mah part Ah doan feel no bad feelin. Ah have shook han an mac eet hup wit de widday beefore Ah have leeve de house dat evenin."

"I am glad to hear you did that," observed Jack, who regarded the Widow Martin's horsey peculiarities with favor, not to say admiration, and often had put up at her hospitable and cleanly hostelry on his various shooting and sporting outings.

"Aw, yas," said Peter, "she have pologize fur what she have say, an aftaire we poot hup de monnah on han of Ephraam Parent she have ax every wan what wus on de bar fur took *un petit fillais* at heur espence, and den Ah have ax all of dem to took sumting wit me, and den sum ov mah nabor what wus dare have treet, an udder folks have treet, and seeng sum *chanson Canadien*, and ole Moyees Duplesis wus dare wit hees veeoleen an play de feedle an sum of dem have dance, an bah gosh! when Ah have dray home bout ten o'clock dat naght, dar wus two black ponay on de cutteur eensted ov de chesnut wan Ah have start wit een de morning!"

"And I suppose the race is pretty well advertised," remarked Jack.

"Avertize!" exclaimed Peter, "You bet you laf dat race wus well avertize! Every wan wus talk eet at de church doer lass Sunday, and dare wus two de Sunday yit."

"Yas, I guess you goan see de beegess crowd dare nevair was on de hice on de lac shore, sure ting."

"By Jove," said Jack, with youthful impulse and enthusiasm, "I'd like to go and see it of all things!"

"*Mais* you was goan come to de race, Monsieur Jack, ay?" exclaimed Peter, remonstratively as, after fumbling about inside the breast of his overcoat, he produced a mammoth silver hunting case watch which he opened with a click, looked at, and closed with a snap. "Dat was goan be de beegess race anywares long de shore dees wintare."

"Yes, I have no doubt it will be," assented Jack, "but I'm doubtful if I'll be able to get to it."

"*Mais! Mais!*" exclaimed the owner of "dat leetle chesnut plug" with a surprised look, as he arose from his leaning posture upon the counter, "What fur you say dat, Monsieur Jack? You was doubtfool eef you was goan come!"

"Well, you see, some of the folks up at the house," explained Jack—meaning by "some of the folks" his father—"have been kicking up a row lately because of my running about, as they call it, to all the races. I was down at one on the Rouge last week, and I got fits when I came back, I can tell you."

"Well, bah George!" exclaimed Peter with an intonation of disgust in his voice, as he pulled on his left glove preparatory to taking his departure, "I tink folks muss have mightay queerious noshun what objec to go an see an horse race on de hice. Dey muss have what we calls een French, *mauvaise pensee* bout heveryting, Ah guess."

"Well," said Jack, rousing up desperately, "I'm going to try my best to go, anyway."

"Dat's raght, Monsieur Jack, dat's raght," assented Peter approvingly, "you muss try you bess to come, acose you goan see de best race you nevaire see beefore, sure ting."

"Yes, I'll be there if it's possible," said Jack resolutely.

'An now I muss be go," cried the sportive Canadian, extending his ungloved right hand, "mine you, Ah was goan espec you at Belle Riviere two week from nex Sateur-day. So good-bye and took care ov yoseff on de meentam," and as he shook hands he patted the youth patronizingly on the right shoulder.

"Good-bye Peter," said Jack, heartily. "I'll be on hand if it's on the cards, you can bet."

"All raght, Monsieur Jack; Ah guess you goan be dare; good-bye," and Mr. Bertrand, with many graceful bows and *au revoirs* to the clerks behind the counter, strode up the long store to the entrance and thence down to the ferry crossing.

Peter was not wrong in taking it for granted that Master Jack would be one of the large crowd who witnessed the much talked of race between the Widow Martin's Crapaud and "dat leetle chesnut plug" on that memorable January afternoon on the lake shore near Belle Riviere.

Jack was there, and inasmuch as his being there marked the outset of an important epoch in his life, a future chapter will be devoted to a record of what transpired on that occasion.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *The Widow Martin and Her Pacing Pony "Crapaud."*

IT WOULD be like carrying coals to Newcastle to tell any ordinarily well informed votary of the trotting turf of America, that the parent stem in the geological tree of many of the most noted trotting and pacing performers of the present phenominally cultivated period of these kinds of speed trials and contests — the names of which are as household words to the general public — found its origin in the Canadian family of French ponies.

They are properly called French because their original ancestry was undoubtedly the Norman horse of France, and they are equally appropriately called ponies, because, in size, they are in most cases greatly degenerate progeny of their parent stock.

But it is only in point of size that they are thus degenerate.

In respect of speed and intelligence they have gained much, and in point of endurance they are notoriously the peers of any other family of horses on this continent.

It is probable that the predisposition with so many of the breed to amble, or pace, which normally is swifter than trotting, and the popular gait in speed contests among the old-time Canadian *habitants*, was primarily superinduced by crossing the Norman horse, of *La Nouvelle France*, with the so-called Narragansett pacer of the English American colonies. The latter breed of horses, it is asserted by a well-

informed authority upon the subject, possessed "a line of heredity that gave them certainty of speed and a certainty of type as long ago as A. D. 1690." They were brought out from Great Britain by the pioneer settlers of Virginia and Rhode Island where it is said, by inbreeding, they established a marked new-world identity of their own and attained a speed of less than *two minutes and thirty seconds to the mile*.

The same authority quoted above says that "the combination of these (the Narragansett pacers) with the French stock imported from France in 1665 produced the Canadian pacer." Then it is further probable that during the early part of the subsequent English occupation of Canada, commencing in 1761, these Canadian pacers were crossed with the English thoroughbred, or well-bred hunter, from which combination *Old Pilot*, a pacer, and the grandsire of *Maud S*, probably originated.

*Old Pilot* was taken from Canada in a plebeian peddler's wagon, and before he died in the States had made for himself the then unprecedented record of 2:26, with 165 pounds on his back, and laid the foundation of a long line of reigning kings and queens of the trotting turf.

Like the ancient progenitor of this dynasty of regal horses, the large majority of Canadian ponies used in the primitive *habitant* races (chiefly on the ice) in the lower province fifty years ago were rackers or pacers. Throughout the French settlements, on either side of the Detroit river, these grotesque races were of frequent and common occurrence, not only on the ice in the winter but also, owing to the flatness of the country during the summer and

dry autumn months, on the straight and level highways or turnpikes.

When purses were given in these contests, as they frequently were, by the sporting country tavern-keepers throughout the region, they usually consisted of a cow, or a sheep, or a pig—the reputed value of the animal being in proportion to the importance of the event and the amount of patronage it was likely to draw to the Boniface's hostelry.

If *une vache de bonne race* was offered, it meant that the proposed contest was an affair above the ordinary, while a pig, or a sheep, or ten bushels of oats denoted a common every-Saturday pastime for practice and the training of incipient flyers.

But this is, of course, representing a state of things which existed years ago.

During the period of this story, as we have learned from Peter Bertrand's relation of how he came to match his "leetal chesnut plug" with the Widow Martin's renowned Crapaud, horse racing among the French along Detroit river and Lake St. Clair had come down or gone up (whichever term the reader may deem best) to a money basis.

The match twixt the widow and Peter Bertrand was no ordinary event.

It was the all-important race on the ice of the season, as well because of the heretofore invincible reputation of the widow's Crapaud, as because of the fact that the general public, not knowing what had transpired in the widow's brush for the lead on New Year's eve, regarded the owner of the chestnut's pretensions as little short of insane. The widow had often before owned reputedly fast horses—in

fact, for years past she had never been without a flyer of some sort, either trotter or pacer—but no pony in point of speed she had ever owned could compare with her present black pacer, "Crapaud."

She had come into possession of him through a judicious trade made with a needy neighbor some five or six years ago; before he had developed the remarkable turn of speed which had since vanquished so many contestants and gained her so many wagers and purses. She never drove him in any of his races herself. She left that usually to an expert who rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Budd Doble, junior," but whose proper patronymic was David Laduseur, whom Peter Bertrand had been heard to describe as a "fuss class *mac-an-ique* fur drav a pacin horse."

The widow, however, constantly drove Crapaud on the road, and he had never failed to show his heels to anything in the shape of a horse she wanted to pass, until she failed to give "dat leetle chesnut plug" the go by, during that memorable drive on the ice from town on New Year's eve. This had been a potent cause of chagrin and disappointment to her, and though she counted much on the superiority of Mr. Budd Doble, junior's, "mac-an-ickal" powers as a driver over her own pretensions in this regard, she none the less looked foward to the coming event with secret forebodings of a possible repetition of her previous experience in a much more humiliating and disastrous form.

But to the outside world who visited her hostelry to talk horse generally, and the coming race in particular, she manifested every confidence and scoffed at the bare idea of the little chestnut's having the slightest ghost of a show to win.

The truth is that this widow was a very remarkable personage. Not, as the reader might very naturally infer from her occupation and manifest predilection, a coarse, masculine and repulsive creature, but on the contrary an exceedingly agreeable mannered, and by no means unattractive woman in point of personal appearance.

On the shady side of fifty with raven black hair, untinged with gray, straight Grecian-like features, large expressive brown eyes, a complexion rather inclined to a swarthy tint, good firm mouth, and a straight upright figure, slightly above the medium height, without the slightest tendency to *embonpoint* or grossness, the widow Martin still possessed the not uncomely remains of what in her youth must have been very remarkable beauty.

She had been married twice. The first time because she loved the man she became the wife of, and at his death being left with a family of five children to provide for; after a widowhood of two years, she had taken unto herself as husband one Ebenezer Martin, who was a short remove from an imbecile, because she either did not care or could not afford to pay a man for doing the chores about the tavern and looking after the work about the farm.

She had kept tavern for many years, and it was always known to the general public as her tavern.

About the only legacy the late Ebenezer left her apart from two additional children to look after, was the privilege of thenceforth prefixing that attractive appellation "widow" to the name of the hostelry.

As the Widow Martin's tavern, it was known throughout the region as a very fair, cleanly *maison de pension* for trav-



ellers, a local headquarters for aspiring politicians during parliamentary election contests, and the winter place of rendezvous of local horsemen for training and racing their ponies on the lake ice near by when the weather permitted. The hostelry, an unpretentious square frame building, was situated on the lake side of the public highway, which runs parallel with the shore, and a short distance from where Belle river debouches its sluggish, turbid waters upon the sandy shores of the St. Clair.

Back from the highway a short distance, the Great Western Railway intersects the narrow farm very nearly at right angles with its length, and this circumstance served as a perennial source of litigation to the sportive and determined proprietress of the Widow Martin's tavern, in that her animals were constantly being run over and maimed or killed by the passing trains.

For several consecutive years she carried on a sort of litigious vendetta against the railway company because of these constantly recurring casualties among her kine, until her name became a household word in the courts and among the lawyers of the judicial district.

Indeed it was said that she was no *mean* lawyer herself. Albeit she was unable to read or write, her adroitness and *finesse* in the witness box frequently elicited the admiration of a crowded court room at the old County Town of Sandwich.

During a spring term of the court, when the roads were usually well nigh impassable for heavy vehicles, she invariably mounted an old-fashioned red wheeled trotting sulky, and with a foot stretched out on the thills on either

side of her pet pony she would reach the scene of her pending legal battle with comparative ease and expedition.

In short, Widow Martin was an enthusiast as to any matter of serious concern she had in hand, and whatever she did she did vigorously and with an eye to the triumphant carrying of her point.

On the morning of the race the sun was still "held a prisoner in the yet undawning East" when she arose after a night of fitful and uneasy rest, and, going to the stable before Mr. Budd Doble, Junior, had put in an appearance, with her own hands she sifted the oats and shook out the small wisp of sweet timothy hay intended for Crapaud's breakfast, which, after removing his crude muzzle she gave him and watched him devour in a manner sufficiently voracious to give her renewed courage in her contemplation of the coming momentous event.

When Mr. Budd Doble, Junior, made his appearance in due course, she thoroughly aroused him from his semi-somnolent condition by a vehement dissertation on the evils of drink in respect of its bearing upon the nerves and judgment of a driver of fast horses, which she wound up by saying, "Now Dawveed, if you drink a single swallow of whisky or any other kind of *boisson*—mind you, one single swallow—except what I give you until the race is over, you and I part company forever, and I think you'll travel a long way before you find a friend who will take as good care of you as I have done."

This conversation was of course carried on in French.

"Yes, Madame," said David, yawning as if his jaws would dislocate, at the same time stretching his arms out to

their full length above his head, "you have always been very good to me."

"Now last night," pursued the widow, "I did not want to interfere with your fun but I saw that you were drinking too much and making too free with the people in the bar, and I know that you went to bed drunk."

"No, I didn't go to bed drunk either!" contradicted David fiercely, as he pulled at the strap to unloosen the buckle of the surcingle, which secured the blanket around the old horse.

"Yes, you did, persisted the widow.

"No, I didn't."

"Yes, you did, I say," repeated the relict of Ebenezer positively.

"Well then," loudly proclaimed David as he walked out of the stall leaving the surcingle and blanket still on the pony "if *you will* have it that I went to bed drunk I guess I'd better not drive this horse in the race to-day!" and he proceeded to button his thin coat at the top button close under his fat double chin with trembling fingers.

"Aw! you needn't talk that way," sneered the widow; "you mustn't suppose that you are the only one I can get to drive my horse. I can drive him myself if it comes to that."

"Well, then, drive him yourself!" loudly exclaimed David, as he moved his fat, short, dumpy figure towards the stable door; "and groom him and take care of him yourself, too! I don't care! You are always fussing and fuming about the horse and interfering with my work."

"I don't want to interfere with your work, Dawveed," said the widow, coming down from her perch of independence, "and I don't want to drive the horse myself, either. Your driving suits me very well, as I have told you before; but I want you to keep sober for your own sake."

"I don't care a picayune for my own sake!" responded David, "I only care for your sake and the old horse's sake."

"Yes, Dawveed, I believe you do think a great deal of the old horse," said the widow, feelingly, "and I know you know how anxious I am that he should win this race to-day. Not for the sake of the money bet on the result, but only because I don't want poor old Crapaud, who has been such a good friend to me and cock of the walk for so long, to be beaten. So we must try to win this race."

"Win this race!" exclaimed the much mollified Mr. Budd Doble, junior, in tones of disgust at the bare thought of a possibility of the old horse not winning the race, "why, the only way he can lose against that little chestnut rat is to fall down or break through the ice, and I don't think either of those accidents will happen him to-day. I only wish I was as sure of getting to heaven as that the old horse will win this race."

"Well, my boy, I hope the result will prove that you are right," doubtfully replied the widow, now completely restored to good humor, with, however, a mental reservation of irrepressible inward doubt as to whether David would ever get to heaven if his doing so depended upon Crapaud's coming to the front to-day.

The fact was that Mr. Budd Doble, junior, did not know the true inwardness of what had taken place during the

widow's repeated brushes for the lead on New Year's eve. She herself, of course, did, but she had never had the abnegatory nerve either as to her own pride, or the prestige attaching to her beloved Crapaud to tell David or any one else of it, and she eagerly devoured the crumbs of comfort evolved from his ignorance of how great had been the improvement in the speed capacity of Peter Bertrand's five-year-old chestnut in the last three months.

The threatening breeze of discord 'twixt the owner and driver was, however, now entirely dispelled by the widow's conciliatorily asking the latter whether he had had his biters yet. "You must feel like having *une petite fillette*, Dawveed," she said; "You haven't had anything yet this morning, have you?"

"No, of course not," sulkily replied David; "how could I have got anything yet this morning? The bar is closed, and I suppose you have got the key in your pocket!" and with the collar of his closely buttoned coat turned up and his coon skin cap pulled far down over his forehead and eyes, with hands in his trouser pockets, he leaned up against the tall oat bin near the stable door.

Upon this stood a coal oil lantern, with the flickering rays of which the early dawning twilight now struggled for supremacy.

"Come along then Dave," said the widow as she took the lantern up from the oat bin and proceeded towards the entrance to the stable, "come to the house and I'll give you an eye-opener, and then you can come out here and clean the old horse off and do whatever else you have to do before you take him out for his morning exercise. I

suppose the crowd will commence to arrive early as we are likely to have a fine, clear day and I'll be too busy to look after it myself, so you must not neglect to take him over to the shop and have his shoes, and particularly the hind ones, set all right."

"All right Madame," responded Dawveed gruffly, as he followed in the widow's wake to the house for his morning bitters. "I'll look after everything all right, you can depend."

"And keep sober Dawveed for my sake?" interrogated the widow nervously and appealingly.

"Oh shaw! of course I'll keep sober for everybody's sake! What do you take me for?" which exclamatory query still remained unanswered as they reached the kitchen door and passed into the house.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *The Fakirs.*

**T**HE WIDOW was right in her estimate of the weather prospects.

After struggling through an opaque bank of leaden grey clouds which fringed the southeastern horizon, old Phœbus, as if bent upon making the most of his brief journey "down to the rosey west" shone forth in all his refulgent, shimmering, winter glory, making the snow-clad, low-lying shores and the vast, ice-bound, glittering lake tryingly dazzling to the naked eye to contemplate.

By twelve o'clock noon a sufficiently large, eagerly expectant crowd had arrived to tax to its utmost capacity the widow's accommodation for man and beast.

The bar and sitting room, the former to the right and the latter to the left of the front entrance hall of the hostelry, were filled to overflowing with a jabbering, good-natured crowd of sportive French yoemanry, interspersed with a sprinkling of English-speaking sharps and flats from the town and city who had been attracted thither by the unwonted importance of the coming event.

The inevitable "sweat board" and "Wheel of Fortune" fakirs from the purlieus of urban civilization were duly represented. The former, by a dapper little man with glittering, ratty eyes, who wore upon his greasy, frizzled head, a high silk hat, a little cocked to one side, and in other respects as well, bore the outward signs of an inward speculative spirit.



He had not worn the high shiney hat on his journey from town, but carried it carefully in the same box which contained his gambling outfit, after the manner of peripatetic actors in the transport of their wardrobes. Evidently he of the ratty eyes deemed a reflective silk hat as indispensable to a proper plying of the "sweat board" business as was the paste diamond cluster, which ornamented his Chinese-laundried shirt front, and the huge Brumagen watch chain which, after encircling his fat, rotund neck, ostentatiously crossed his stiffly starched, immaculate bosom and modestly terminated its utilitarian career by unobtrusively passing through one of his low-cut waistcoat button holes and appearing at his fob as an unpretentious and serviceable watch guard.

He was an oleaginous little man, was this "sweat board" speculator, and withal courteously polite and insinuatingly diplomatic in his business method of address.

He had ensconced himself in a corner of the large bar-room, and by a specious and mildly earnest and sincere manner of putting the enriching qualities of the game of "sweat board" to the crowd, was quietly plying his beguiling vocation with moderately satisfactory results. After repeated taps on the "sweat board" table to attract the attention of the crowd he said: "Now, gents, here is the little game we call "chuck-a-luck" in my country--an old and familiar game to sporting speculators in all parts of the world.

"We play it a great deal in the country I come from.

"We play it there because it is a fair game, a square game, a game of honest and legitimate chance, in which the

novice stands as good a show as the oldest man in the business. In fact, it has been my experience of this honest pastime that the man who plays it for the first time in nine cases out of ten comes out a winner.

"Now, gentlemen, here's your opportunity." Here the specious little man dived his right hand down into his trouser pocket and pulled forth five twenty-dollar gold pieces, and as he tossed them up from one hand to the other he continued his preliminary remarks: "I brought these five twenty-dollar gold pieces and a roll of United States national currency along to-day, and if I don't do one of two things with them before I go back to the city after the race is over, I'll be a disappointed man. I am either going to leave it here with you to invest in whatever charitable or other institution you may deem worthy of your patronage, or in default of this, I fain would take the roll back so fattened as to enable me to increase my already large contribution to the Young Men's Christian Association Benevolent Fund.

"Now, here's your chance gents, here's your chance! It will be two hours yet before the horses start in the race and until that begins we are better here beside the fire than we would be shivering with the cold outside. Come right along then, gents, and try your luck. Twenty-five cents on the six, he says. There you are, sir. Now then, sir, throw the dice to suit yourself, remembering always that it is an invariable rule of the game that you must cover them. Raise the box with your own honest hands sir. Two sixes and a deuce.

There you are, sir! You win twenty-five cents twice, twenty-five cents two times, making a grand total of fifty

cents. There you are, sir. Now drop the dice back into the box—do it with your own honest hands—make your bet and shake ‘em up again’ to suit yourself. Ah, there you are again! You win once again, sir. Keep right on that way and I’ll resign my membership in the Young Men’s Christian Association in your favor and seek oblivion in the walks of private life.”

However much of Greek to many of his hearers there may have been in this stereotyped manner of address, it was not without material results and the unctuous little faker for a time drove a lively traffic in five-, ten- and twenty-five-cent pieces.

In the sitting room across the hall, the wheel of Fortune, at a ten-cent basis, rotated ephemeral gains and ultimate inevitable losses to its adventurous votaries.

It was manipulated by its owner who, in point of physique, was an animated demonstration of a geometrical straight line as possessing length without breadth. He was a tall man with light tow-like hair and mischievously twinkling grey eyes, and withal pigeon-toed and preternaturally long-armed. He spoke English with a slight Yankee-French twang and a humid splutter, as if his tongue performed some sort of acrobatic somersault within his mouth at the beginning and ending of each sentence he uttered.

Whatever he said, as Arbiter of Dame Fortune’s speculative wheel, he said solemnly and with a sphinx-like rigidity of countenance; but while his outward form, and long drawn-out, deliberate method of articulation savored of church yards, and kindred sepulchral things, his small eyes dazzled and danced beneath their quivering lids as if his

whole personal make up and immediate surroundings were a very amusing joke.

He stood forward to the left of the wheel, which was placed within a few inches from the wall on an impromptu platform so that any one in the room could easily distinguish the numbers upon it. "Here, my friends," called out this bizarre funereal-looking sport in sonorous and stentorian tones, "here is the Wheel of Fortune, the fairest and friendliest game known to man. It is so fair and so friendly that the first time I ever saw it operate on the race track at Detroit last fall I won enough money playing agin it to become its owner; and here it is in all its original innocence." Here he gave the wheel a push downwards, which sent it flying around its axis with lightning speed. "Anybody can see that there is no chance for a gouge here," he continued solemnly. "Anybody can see how she works. Anybody can work her. That's the reason a respectable gent from the country like yours truly owns her. Nuthin mysterious about this ere game! These are the paddles (holding them up), twenty of them, with five of the one hundred numbers on the wheel on each one of them. At ten cents a paddle there will be two dollars in the pool. I turn the wheel in this manner, and whenever she stops that there Injun rubber indicator will pint to a certain number, and whoever holds the paddle with that number on it rakes in the pot, less ten per cent for the poor. Here is a charitable game for you, my friends. A simple game for honest folks. A fair game; a square game. Every man who plays it is on equal terms with every other man in the pool. Only ten cents per paddle. One shove of the wheel,

and when she stops rollin, two dollars to the winner, less ten per cent for the deservin poor! Come, my friends; here are your paddles. Ten cents? Yes, only ten cents. Five of em to one gent! There, sir, hope you'll git thar, my friend. Only one more paddle—here you are, my friend! One more paddle to sell and the game is made. Come, be quick about it! or here she goes, and I keep it myself; and I'll probably win the pot, cos I'm terrible lucky playin agin this ere wheel. Do you want it, sir? Yes, sir, only ten cents. Here's the lucky one! Who wants it? Ten cents? Yes, sir. Thank you, my friend. And now, gents, the game is made, and here she goes!"

Thus the game once started, the Doctor, as this serio-comic sepulchral-looking faker was familiarly nicknamed, found no difficulty in keeping it going until the news reached the house that the start for the first heat in the race was about to take place, whereupon there occurred a general stampede of his speculative patrons to the track along the frozen lake shore, now glittering in the sunshine, and marked well nigh throughout its entire straight mile of length by groups and detached patches of every description of man and horsekind known to the neighborhood.

Every sort of winter conveyance used by the *habitants* was there represented, from the crude jumper and traino, with its tall, upright wood rack, to the *cariole* and old fashioned family sleigh, which usually contained two or more of the tenderer sex in holiday attire.

Meanwhile, every available inch of shelter afforded by the widow's tavern, and the sheds and stables of her neighbors were filled to overflowing with horses and ponies

of the better sort driven thither by sporting patrons from a distance.

Among the last of these to arrive were Jack Rathbone and his boon companion, Charley Ford, of Detroit, in a half-famished condition after their long drive. The former by a *russe* which will hereafter be referred to, managed to steal away from the paternal domicile with his grey pony and well appointed cutter, and picking up his friend as previously arranged, had succeeded in making a late start from the city. They had made up for lost time a bit by driving the distance, about twenty miles, in two hours and five minutes by the watch, and the grey pony, a little thing not quite fourteen hands in height, presented a somewhat jaded appearance in consequence, when they pulled up in the back yard of the widow's tavern. Jack, who was always considerate of animals, not without considerable difficulty, because of the crowd, personally saw to the comfortable bestowal of the little mare before he and his companion sought the house for refreshment and food to hurriedly appease their vigorous, youthful appetites.

The widow had driven a great trade, both in the dining room and bar, but notwithstanding this, throughout all the incidental din of crush and crowd, anxiety as to the result of the coming event was ever uppermost in her mind.

She could not rid herself of constantly reviving thoughts of how futile had been her efforts to give Peter Bertrand and the little chestnut the go-by on New Year's Eve.

"Crapaud" was still the favorite with the crowd at odds and she had been on the point of remonstrating with several

of her acquaintances who had betted two and three to one on the old horse, but then this would have betrayed her rankling, inward doubt of the result, and entailed an explanation of the circumstance of her lamentable failures in her brushes for the lead during that memorable drive from town on the last day of the year just past. What! let the world about her suspect the chagrin and humiliating annoyance she had felt because of that episode? No, indeed, she was a woman every inch of her, albeit her horsey tastes, and like a woman she clung to the impression of what there might in the end prove to be no necessity for mentioning to anybody.

The old horse might win in to-day's race.

In fact, with the exception of a few of Peter Bertrand's nearest friends, it was the very general opinion that it would prove a walk-away for Crapaud, and although she felt from what she had seen of the little chestnut's speed that this could not very well be, still, the old horse as driven by Mr. Budd Doble, Junior, might come to the front, and in that event her silence upon the subject of her futile brushes for the lead during that drive from town would prove the proper thing to have done; and she certainly never would allow her dear old horse to start in a race again.

If Peter Bertrand's pony had only had an established reputation on the local turf she would not so much mind being beaten by him; but to be vanquished by a green five-year-old, whose owner she had patronized with such absurd and annoying consequences, was more than she could comfortably contemplate.

She was full of these nervous misgivings when, leaving the work in the dining room and kitchen for her eldest daughter, Rosalie, and hired girl to look after, she hurriedly encased herself in a fur jacket and close-fitting, fur trimmed hood and sallied forth to witness the first heat.



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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Race on the Ice.*

**J**UST AS the widow flounced out of the back door entrance of the hostelry, Jack Rathbone and Charley Ford crossed the yard from the barn.

Seeing the young men she called out, excitedly, "Hello, Monsieur Ratbone; Ah wus glad to see you not forgot to come to de race. And you, too, Monsieur Ford, I wus glad to see you here to-day."

"How de do, Madame Martin," said Jack as he approached her with outstretched hand. "No, we couldn't keep away from the race, and we have arrived here pretty nearly starved. Have you got anything to eat left in the house?"

"Well, Ah doan know; Ah guess so, dough," said the widow, shaking hands with the young men hurriedly; "come een dis way trough de keetchen an ax Rosalie eef she coon't git you sumting."

"Is Miss Rosalie in the house?" eagerly enquired Mr. Ford, with whom the young lady in question—a pretty, brown-eyed girl of eighteen—had flirted on the occasion of a previous sojourn at the widow's during one of his and Jack Rathbone's shooting expeditions in the neighborhood.

"Oh, yes, you will fine Rosalie een de keetchin, Ah guess. We have be so beesay: dare wus such a crowd here for dinner dat we wus moss run off of our leg. Ah have only jews be able to got way now, and eef Ah doan hurry Ah goan mees de fuss heat; so you muss please excoose me."

"How is the race going to come out, do you think, Mrs. Martin?" cried Jack as the widow swiftly and excitedly set out for the lake shore.

"Oh, Ah doan know," she called back, shrugging her shoulders and smiling nervously; "Ah goan toll you bet-taire affaire de fust heat."

"I have never seen the old lady so excited about anything before," observed Charley Ford to Jack.

"Neither have I. She has evidently set her heart upon winning this race, and is not by any means certain as to how it's coming out. But we must hurry and interview Rosalie and see whether she can't get a sandwich or a cold bite of something we can carry in our hands and eat on our way down to the track, or we'll miss the first heat. See! Look! The horses are warming up for the start now."

"Yes, I see," replied Ford, "You can get there as soon as you please. I'm going to take it easy and wait until Rosalie is ready to go."

"Perhaps she is not going to the race at all," suggested Jack.

"In that case I'll not go to the race either," replied Master Ford, laughing, as they passed through the little lean-to outside summer kitchen into the larger inner one, still redolent of comfortable warmth, fried onions and other culinary odors, ravishingly tantalizing to the young men's sharpened appetites.

Meanwhile the widow reached the coming-in score (upon which, in a two-seated *cariole*, sat the three judges) in ample time to see the horses start from the other end.

"Clar de track! Got off de way," shouted the stoutest and most important looking one of the judges standing up on the forward seat of the judicial sleigh. "Clar de track dare! De horses wus jews goan start—mac dose folks stan beek dare Ephraham! Look out, d'ave start! No, she's no start! Dey wus go back agin."

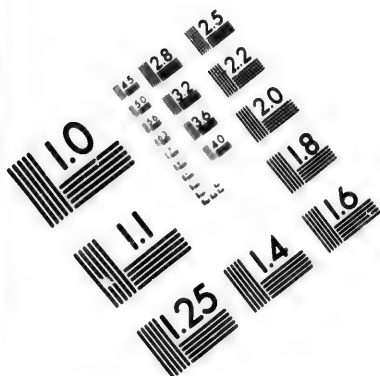
And they did go back again a half a dozen times before they got the word for the start, with the experienced old Crapaud, famous as a rapid scorer, having a little the best of it.

But he did not retain this advantage long.

"Dat leetle chestnut plug" soon demonstrated the fact that he possessed quite as much speed as his competitor by drawing up on even terms with the old horse, and for two-thirds of the mile they whizzed along at a 2:30 gait so nearly abreast of each other and so close together that the proverbial blanket could have covered the pair.

It was a very exciting heat—every inch of the way being struggled and striven for with stubborn persistency by both horses and their drivers, who yelled unearthly howls of caution and encouragement, commencing slowly with the lowest note in the gamut and gradually ascending, with accelerating speed, to the apex of the scale, would burst forth into a series of yelps and whoas, and "gee-long dare, mon sacre pollison."

The little chestnut completely astounded the gaping, noisy crowd of excited on-lookers, who lined either side of the last quarter of a mile of the track, by actually out-footing the heretofore invincible Crapaud, and driving him to a break, the gamy old horse irretrievably lost at least



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two lengths—about the distance between the two when the triumphant chestnut crossed the winning score, amid the loud acclamations of the astonished on-lookers.

Great was the excitement of the enthusiasts as they circled around, and pressed forward to pat the little chestnut with their homespun mittened hands as he returned to the winning post to await the arrival of the starting judges from the other end of the track to report to their *confreres* at the finish whether or not the start was a fair one.

Impressive was it to behold Peter Bertrand's countenance beaming with suppressed triumph and excitement as he nimbly moved his Herculean form about, tremblingly assaying to tuck within the shafts a disreputable-looking, old, wadded, patch quilt he had succeeded in throwing over the steaming equine hero.

In reply to the congratulations of surprised friends he exclaimed, "*Comment mes amis! vous me prendre pas pour un fou eh?*" and then catching Jack Rathbone's eager eye, "You see Monsieur Jack, what Ah wus toll you have come true ay? Dee'nt Ah toll you we wus goan geeve de widday's great Crapaud pootay hard poosh to-day?"

"Yes, Peter!" exclaimed Jack with fervor, "you're a true prophet, and no one on this ice is better pleased than I am," and struggling through the surging crowd of jabbering admirers of "dat leetle chesnut plug" he shook Peter's brawny, outstretched hand with all his might.

"Tank you, tank you, Monsieur Jack; Ah taught you would not mees dees. Ah wus look fur you beefore."

The starting judges not having yet arrived to give their report, Peter's pony and sleigh was slowly led back and

forth past the judges' sleigh by his driver, a stubby little man of any age, with bandy legs and a suspiciously rubicund complexion, from the corner of whose thick lipped, half-open mouth there trickled down a liberal oozing of tobacco juice.

"Have you got much beside the stake bet on the result, Peter," enquired young Rathbone as he walked along side the latter in the wake of the pony and sleigh.

"No, Ah have not got nutting wort speaking bout on de race, and dat what's mac me feel lac keeekin meseff now!"

"How much have you got bet?" enquired Jack.

"Beesides de stakes wit de widday?"

"Yes."

"Honlay tree to fahve two tam," deprecatingly responded Peter, "an eef Ah honlay hav nuff confeendence Ah could have ween more's wan hundred dollair, sure ting."

"And you have only bet three to five twice. Do you mean in dollars?"

"No, not bote of dem. One of dem wus een quarteur, an de udder wan wus een dollair."

"Then you only stand to win six dollars and twenty-five cents outside the stake."

"Yas, Ah guess dat's all," regretfully assented Peter as he shifted the bucket and large sponge he was carrying from one hand to the other. "Dat's what mac me feel so mad wit meseff now, acose Ah'm sure we wus goan ween."

"Well, I am glad that you feel so certain about it," replied the youth. "Glad for my own sake, too, because I'll win five dollars which I bet since I arrived here on the strength of what you told me the other day in the store



about your brush with the widow on New Year's eve. But do you feel quite sure the little fellow will last the race out?"

"What! *Lass out de race?*" indignantly exclaimed Peter with sidelong glances at his young friend. "Why, *mon ami*, dat pony wus de son ov mah ole trottin mare 'Lizay Durand,' and she's nevaire know how to quit! An hees faddeur wus de St. Louis pacin horse, and he wus good wan, too. Oh, no! Ah doan scare fur dat wuss a cent."

"Then you must have raised the colt yourself. I always thought you bought him from somebody a year or so ago. Didn't Charley Maisonville, of the Dew Drop Inn at Walkerville, have him at one time?"

"Aw, yas, Farrow Maisonville have him leetle while bout wan year ago now. But he wus honlay break heem an train heem fur me, you know. Aw, yas, Ah have raise heem meseff," and Mr. Bertrand lowered his head in ratifying satisfaction.

"Have you given him any name yet?"

"Well, we alway calls him Deek to home," replied Peter, shrugging his shoulders doubtfully.

"But I mean have you given him any racing name?"

"Aw well, de byes mongst de nabor 'roun wheres Ah leeve calls heem 'Hup-an-go consan' or 'Hop-an-go-consan.' Ah doan know what's dat mean, Does you Monsieur Jack?" confidentially enquired Peter with a bewildered expression of countenance.

"Up-and-go-constant!" repeated Jack laughingly, "Oh I don't know whether I can explain what it means, but I do know that the boys must have meant to make fun of

him when they gave him such an absurd name as 'Up-and-go-constant.' "

"Yas, Ah guess dat's a fac," ruefully assented Peter, "dey want's to mac fun an fooleeshness ov heem, but Ah tink dey wus goan change dare toon aftaire dees, an Ah goan geeve heem good nam you see."

"What do you think of calling him?" queried Jack.

"Well Ah doan know," said Peter, dubiously shrugging his broad shoulders. "Ah have not zaclay feex on dat yit you see—*mais* how does you tink Yeller Deek would soot?"

"Yellow Dick!" exclaimed Jack, with an effort to keep his face straight. "Why nobody ever heard of a yellow horse!"

"Well, Ah guess he wus pootay nigh yeller, wus'nt he?" expostulated Peter.

"Oh, no; he is a good many shades off being yellow," remonstrated Jack.

"Yas," admitted Mr. Bertrand, doubtingly, "praps he wus not zaclay yeller, what you calls reglar yeller *pure et simple* you know, *mais* he wus dirtay yeller—jews lac as eef he wus go and roll een dee dirt somewares ain't eet?"

"Oh, no, he is a long way off from being yellow. He is a chestnut; that's the proper name for his color—and one of the prettiest shades of chestnut, too. Why not call him Chestnut Dick?"

"Aw, no; Chesnut wus too ole fur young horse lac he was. No, we muss tink ov sum udder nam."

At this juncture, the starting judges having arrived and reported that the start for the first heat was all fair and

right, the fat, winning post judge scrambled to an upright posture upon the front seat of the judicial vehicle, and calling out "Seelance! Seelance, *mes amis*! Shut hup you mout, dare! Hole on, dare! Leesen!" managed to bring the crowd to a sufficiently long period of quietude to announce the result of the heat. He said: "De horse ov Peirro Bertran have ween de fust heat all fair an square; so we have deside we goan geeve dat heat to heem. No tam wus took."

Evidently this ponderous judge was disposed to be loquacious and spin out his official announcements to as great length as might be; but the crowd, in its excitement, was in no humor for unnecessary verbiage, and any further remarks from the judges' sleigh would have been drowned amidst the cheers and counter cheers and yells of the noisiest portion of the crowd as they stampeded for the widow's hostelry for refreshments.

"How does you tink de nam ov "Louis Papineau" would soot mah ponay, Monsieur Jack?" enquired Peter, resuming the conversation interrupted by the judge's announcement.

"Yes, that wouldn't be a bad name," responded Jack. "Neither would 'Louis Riel.'"

"Aw, no, no!" objected Mr. Bertrand; "'Louis Riel' wus too onluckay. De udder wan wus bettaire. Ah guess dare wus no wan mongst us French Canadien dat have do so much good fur hees compatriots as Papineau."

"Yes, I have always heard that Papineau was a great man, and quite a benefactor to his country."

"Well, Ah doan know what's dat mean, *mais* Ah'm sure he wus grate mans an grande hero, too!" asserted Peter whose limited knowledge of the historical status of Papineau was purely an outcome of hear-say tradition.

"But Papineau has been dead some years, has he not?" asked the youth.

"Aw, yas, av course he wus dead long tam ago, more as feeftay year, Ah guess — but bah gosh! Ah toll you he wus grate mans dough!" and the Herculean owner of "dat leetle chesnut plug" confidently, and with an air of mystery slowly nodded his head back and forth as if he could a tale unfold illustrative of the prowess and acumen of his dead compatriot, which would paralyze his youthful listener.

But he desisted, and Jack, pursuing the subject of a suitable name for the pony said, "But do you think Peter that it's quite the right thing to call a living horse after a dead man? It's scarcely fair to the horse, and I don't think it could exactly be regarded as a very high honor to the dead to call a race horse after him."

"Well, maybe not," responded Peter with a demonstrative shrug of his shoulders.

"Now, I'll tell you what I'll do with you Peter," continued Jack, blushing as if he were about to perpetrate a most audacious suggestion, "If you call that pony after me, I'll give him the best and thickest blanket I can buy for money, and have his name marked upon it in handsome letters."

"What!" cried Peter, coming to a stand, "Call heem Jack Ratbone?"

"Yes," said Jack, timidly, nodding his head.

"Bah gosh, Ah'll do eet! Ah goan call heem Jack Ratbone; shook han wit me!" and he changed the half filled water bucket from his ham-like right, to his left hand, and shook Jack's diminutive palm with a vigorous confirmatory grip.

Then approaching the judges he said, "Genseemans, jewjes, beefore dees race beegin Ah have toll you dat mah horse have got no nam. Dat was de trute at dat tam. *Mais* now eet ees deeferant ting; Ah have jews chreesen heem. Aftaire dis he weel be know bah de nam ov "Jack Ratbone." Then turning to the crowd behind him he launched out into a mixture of French and English explanation. "*Cette jeune homme*," he said, putting his hand lightly on the blushing Jack's shoulder, "*est le fils de Monsieur Robert Ratbone de Detroit, un de mes grandes amis*. Moss ov de folks roun here knows heem, Ah guess."

"*Aw, oui! Nous connait bien. Il est un de nous autres!*" shouted certain of the large-lunged crowd.

"*Oui mes amis* Jack Ratbone," reasserted Peter deliberately, as he slowly nodded his head back and forth. "Jack Ratbone wus goan be de nam of dat leetle Deeck aftaire dees."

"Hoorah pour Jack Ratbone!"

"*Il est un de nous autres!*"

"*Eh bien! Comment?* Hoorah pour nous autres den!" variously exclaimed the effervescent admirers of the pony's new name among the crowd.

And what were the feelings of our bipedal young friend Jack Rathbone himself while this was going on?

Had the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland, or what in his own estimation would have been far better, the Presidential toga of the United States suddenly fallen upon him, the mantling glow of proud satisfaction, which sent his warm young blood coursing through his veins to his bright young face and well shaped head, could not have thrilled his heart with greater momentary happiness. To have so promising and fast a young horse named after him! What beatitude! And as if to signalize the auspicious event the temporarily hidden sun now emerged from behind a flying cloud and again shed forth his dazzling rays upon the hilariously gathering crowd (now rapidly returning from the widow's tavern) in gratefully warm and resplendent glory.

There was an indefinable something about this precocious young American, which drew older, middle-aged people and very young children to him.

He had inherited a certain sort of Frenchy vivacity from his mother which the English stolidity of his father had toned down into a remarkably unassuming and agreeable manner.

He could not carry on a sustained conversation in French, but he could understand the Canadian patois and appreciated the quaintness of the habits and customs peculiar to these simple minded people. While they, on the other hand, through his mother, regarded him as partly, if not wholly, one of themselves.

As we have seen, from his early youth he had mixed much with them in his shooting outings along the lake and river, and in attending the sort of gatherings he was at

to-day; and his popularity had grown with his increasing acquaintance and his advancing young manhood.

So that Peter Bertrand, apart from considering the promised horse blanket as an incentive (and it is only fair to say that it had but little weight in inducing him to do so) was not far astray in naming his equine hero after his young Detroit friend. In fact it had the effect of increasing the little chestnut's popularity with the crowd, if that were possible, in view of his amazing performance in the first heat.

"Hoorah pour Jack Ratbone!" went up on all sides, and was becoming more universally acceptable, when one of the winning post judges vociferously rung a large dinner bell, preliminary to calling the horses up for the second heat.

"Now genseemans!" shouted the fat judge, after he had succeeded in balancing himself in an upright position on the forward seat of the judicial sleigh. "You muss keep ordeur! Took yo horses down to de startin poss fur de seconde heat. Does you hear me, you draveurs?"

"Aw, yas, Ah hears you Monsieur Badeeshow," replied the bandy-legged driver of "dat leetle chesnut plug."

"Does you hear me, Dawveed?" yelled the judge to the driver of Crapaud.

"Aw, yas, Ah hears you," sulkily responded Mr. Budd Doble, junior.

The bandy-legged driver of the chestnut now stopped his vibratory leading of his charge, and taking the bucket of water from Peter, gave the little fellow two or three swallows preparatory to checking him up and getting ready to



obey the judge's behest. Nudging Peter, who stood alongside him, ready to remove the patch quilt off the pony at the last moment, he said: "*Regard donc la vielle avec sa bouteille noire!*" and then he shouted out to the driver of Crapaud: "Aw, Dave, you kin geeve de ole feller all de wheeskey you wants; Ah kin beat him drunk or sobeur to-day!"

"Oh, you goan drown youseff," snarled back Mr. Doble, junior.

"Not beefor Ah've berray you!" yelled he of the bandy legs, as he drove off up the glistening track to warm up for the second heat.

Meanwhile, with dampened ardor, a small crowd of doubting supporters surrounded Crapaud as he was being made ready to go up for the start. Dave, his driver, was vainly trying to staunch the oozing blood from a small cut on the gamey old fellow's quarter, when the widow, excited and out of breath, with a black quart bottle in hand, elbowed her way through the sympathetic little crowd and put her unoccupied hand upon the driver's shoulder as he bent over the injured near forward foot, which he held between his slightly bent knees.

Handing the black bottle to Mr. Doble, junior, she said: "Dar, Dawveed, put some of dees on dat cut; took a swaller yoseff, and den geeve de balance to de poo ole feller heemseff," and in response to her equine pet's whinny of recognition either of the bottle or herself, she affectionately patted him upon his arched neck. "Nevaire mine, mah po ole feller; you not goan cut yo foot agin dees heat, Ah hope. You goan show dem what you kin do dees tam,



aint you?" Then, as if deriving renewed courage and confidence from this monologue, she placed her arms akimbo, her hands resting on her hips, and turning to the small crowd behind her, she confidentially and with an intonation of banter said: "Ah nevaire see de ole horse go back on hees wheeskey yit! Eet always maces heem bout ten secon fasser when he gits eet at de raght tam. We'll see what we goan see beefor dees heat ees ovaire!" and warming into a throe of confidence she called out loudly: "Anybody on dees crowd dats want bet ten dollair heven on dees heat come dees way, an Ah goan commodate heem!"

But no one responded to this banter. Ten dollars oversized their pile. Many of them had already bet odds on Crapaud before the first heat, and having spent the remainder of their available capital in Bacchanalian refreshments, were left without a stiver to hedge with. Whistling to keep their courage up, and demonstrative sympathy for the widow and her black champion with a view to future free drinks, were the only recourses left open to them.

After a religious observance of the widow's instructions as to the "swaller" for his own inner man, Mr. Budd Doble, junior, elevated the old horse's head, and inserting the mouth and neck of the black bottle in the corner of his jaws, poured its contents down his throat, to the manifest satisfaction of Crapaud himself as well as of his witnessing bipedal sympathizers.

Then the relict of the late Ebenezer the Second held the reinvigorated pony by the head and encouragingly patted him upon his head and foretop, while Dave, having gotten into the sleigh, gathered up the reins, and tucking in a well

nigh hairless old yellow buffalo skin closely about his unpoetic, dumpy body, was ready for the warming up, just as the fat judge called out: "What's de mattaire dare, Dawveed? Eef you doan hurray up we not goan got trough to-night, for sure!"

"All raght! All raght!" yelled Mr. Doble, junior, in reply; "Leff go hees head, Meesses!"

"Say, Dawveed!" excitedly exclaimed the widow as she let the anxious pony's head go, and hurriedly going to the side of the cutter (unconsciously adopting English in her flurry) she audibly whispered: "When you gits up to de startin poss, Dawveed, call Moyees Ladeur to wan side an wheespeur to heem dat eef he doan geeve you good start, Ah goan mac heem pay dat monnay raght away! Hees know what you mean! Mine you doan forgit dat, Dawveed!" And David, nodding his coon-skin cap in assent, gave the old horse his head and drove rapidly up the track towards the starting post.

It may be well here, by way of explanation of this final enjoinder of the widow's to mention the fact that Moses Lafleur, one of the starting judges, was a delinquent debtor of hers in the sum of six dollars for an alleged well-bred ram lamb.

And now all was in readiness for the start for the second heat.

Jack Rathbone, still radiant with pride and excitement, had secured a seat along-side his friend Peter Bertrand, on top of a peddler's van sleigh; while his *compagnon de voyage* and *fidus achates*, Charley Ford, true to his expressed determination, had become the *cavalier* of Rosalie Martin, and

shortly after their arrival at the track they had joined a jolly party of by no means ill-looking girls, who had a comfortable double-box sleigh with plenty of straw at the bottom of it, and was otherwise supplied with robes and wraps, all to themselves.

The sleigh had been pulled up about a hundred yards from the winning post immediately alongside of the last quarter stretch and here, as the solitary male guardian escort, apart from the old *habitant* driver and chaperon, father of one of the girls, Mr. Ford was in his most acceptable element.

Indeed this young gentleman was essentially a ladies' man and ever on the alert for conquests among the fair sex. He was a tall, well developed, light haired youth, a year or two older than young Rathbone, whom he sufficiently resembled to be easily taken for his brother, and in fact, strangers meeting them for the first time together invariably set them down as emanating from one common parental source. They were, however, the very opposite of each other in respect of their tastes and inclinations, a not very infrequent peculiarity between near friends—and from their childhood up had been boon companions. Young Ford had often accompanied Jack Rathbone on the latter's frequent shooting and fishing outings over the border into Canada, not so much because of his fondness for fishing or field sports as for his love for the incidental adventures these expeditions sometimes afforded.

"Hello there, Jack!" called out this dude-like Lothario from his seat amidst the bevy of girls.

"Hello yourself," shouted Jack back cheerily.

"These young ladies," yelled Mr. Ford "want to know whether we won't stop for the dance at the widow's to-night. They say it's going to be a grand affair. I tell them it all depends upon you, and they want to know what you're going to do about it?"

"Time enough to answer that after the race is over!" cried Jack, "but I know I'll catch Jessie if I don't get home to-night!"

And then Mr. Ford was subjected to a rigid cross-examination by his fair companions as to who the inevitable Jessie was who stood so imminent a chance of catching so desirable a *parti* as "Monsieur Jack Ratbone."

"Clar de track! Clar de track!" shouted the fat judge after one of his *confreres* had attracted the attention of the noisy crowd by demonstratively ringing the resonant dinner bell. "Clar de track! Got hoff de way! de horses ees bote at de startin poss and weel be comin een a meenit now! Git to wan side or udder, you folkes what stan een de meedle of de road dare! Clar de track genseeman! Got hoff de way, *mes amis*."

"Dare hoff! Dare hoff! Dare dey goes! Hooray!" shouted a maudlin old countryman, whose persistent practice at the bar of the widow's hostelry throughout the day had rendered him totally unable to distinguish a hole in a ladder fifty feet away. None the less, the crowd took up the refrain "Dare off! Dare off! Clar de track, here dey comes!" and all was eager, palpitating excitement among the abbreviated specimens of the crowd and those who, not being upon some elevated foothold, were unable to see any-

thing of what was going on at the starting score at the upper end of the track.

There were a great many false alarms of this kind among the thickest of the gathering along the quarter stretch before the word was given for the start—as much time having been consumed in scoring as often aggravatingly takes place in an important race for a large purse upon the regular turf.

When, however, the ponies did get away, as in the first heat, Crapaud had rather the best of it, thus making it a fair matter for speculation whether or not Monsieur Moses Lafleur's ram lamb indebtedness to the widow had at all influenced him in the exercise of his judicial functions.

However that may be, Crapaud did not long retain his advantage, for the chestnut, coming with a rush, soon lapped him, and they paced on side and side—their drivers sending forth the most unearthly yells—to the half mile.

Here, owing to a little unsteadiness on the part of "dat leetle chesnut plug," Crapaud got a slight lead—perhaps half a length or so—which he held to the commencement of the last quarter, amidst the approving yells and acclamations of the widow's division of the assembled crowd along the stretch. But the poor old horse's bolt was shot, however, for the newly, christened "Jack Rathbone," coming with an unprecedented burst of speed, threw the old fellow off his feet, utterly demoralized and unable to regain his lost advantage, while the little chestnut, coming on as steady as a steam motor, crossed the score four or five lengths to the good, amidst the wildest shouts of excited approbation.

Then there was a rush and a scramble for positions as near as possible to the judges' sleigh, as the victorious chest-

nut, having stopped and turned about, was being led back to the winning post by his highly elated owner.

This was a triumphal march difficult of accomplishment, owing to the eager desire of every man and boy composing the concourse of enthusiasts through which the victor had to pass, to put their hands upon him or give him a pat of approval.

But with poor old Crapaud, how different was it!

The heretofore invincible victor of many a hard-fought contest had come to grief. He had again cut his quarter, this time far worse than in the first heat, and the blood trickled down from his near fore foot, as with bowed head he held it up off the ice in manifest pain. Mr. Budd Doble, junior, his driver, had gotten out of the cutter and, unchecking him, stood at his head patting his drooping neck in helpless sympathy, as dejected looking as the poor old horse himself—while the widow bent over the injured foot in tearful and speechless lamentation. Evidently her idolized Crapaud was *hors de combat*, and to start him for the third heat would be too cruel to think of.

Silently she turned from this melancholy spectacle and, going to the judges, she announced her withdrawal of her horse and her relinquishment of the stakes in accents broken with irrepressible grief.

After a short consultation among themselves, the resonant clanging-clang of the dinner bell again arose above the din of excitement, presaging a judicial pronouncement of some sort.

Monsieur Badeeshow, the Falstaffian spokesman-judge, having struggled to his feet on the forward seat of the judicial

sleigh, after comparatively silent attention was secured, cleared his throat and said, "Genseemans! Madame Martin have withdrawn Crapaud from de race an geeve hup de stake!"

This announcement was met with conflicting acclamations of approval and loudly vehement expressions of dissent, and the judge could deliver nothing further of his pronunciamento and be heard.

Those who had bet upon the little chestnut, or who were otherwise in sympathy with Peter Bertrand, were unstinted in their expressions of approval of the widow's course in withdrawing Crapaud from the contest.

It was the very thing she ought to have done, because he did not stand the ghost of a show to win. While those who had bet upon the poor old horse said the whole thing was a put up job to rob them of their money, and the individual sportsmen among this division who had respectively lost all the way from twenty-five to fifty and seventy-five cents were especially chagrined and loudly demonstrative in their manifestations of disapproval.

At one time the hub-bub arising from these contentious expressions of opinion appeared to forebode a free fight, and the atmosphere seemed redolent of war; but happily the dogs were not slipped and the cloud rolled by.

After much vociferous ringing of the dinner bell, which, for a time rather contributed to the pandemonium-like condition of things than otherwise, the judge, by dint of not a little violent gesticulatory yelling, succeeded in calming the crowd sufficiently to proceed with what he had to say, "Genseeman! *mes amis!* Silence un moment! Wan horse,"



he continued, "coo'nt run agin heemseff! (*Ce bien vrais! Ce la verite* from the crowd.) Wan horse coo'nt pass heemseff een de race. (Dat's a fac.) Wan horse coo'nt come behine heemseff een wan race! (*Vous avez raison! Pour le sure.*) Needer go head ov heemseff! (Dat's a fac! Bullay for you ole boy.) Een faceet was amposseeb to have a race baytween two horse eef wan ov dem wus drawed hoff dat race!" and the judge here shrugged his shoulders and extended his outstretched palms to the full length of his short fat arms in forensic attitude over the heads of the nearest of his audience, the same being loud in its expressions of acceptance or rejection of so self-apparent a platitude. "So on konseekonce of dat," continued Mons. Badeeshow, "sence Madame Martin have witdrawed Crapaud from de race, an geeve hup all she's clam ov de stake, we have deccide to geeve dees heat an de race to de horse ov Monsieur Pierro Bertrand, which eet wus now call bah de nam ov 'Jack Ratbone,' an so she's feeneesh!"

"*Hoorah pour Jack Ratbone! Il a gagner!*" shouted a large majority of the dispersing crowd.

"*Hoorah pour Pierro Bertrand!*" yelled the thirsty, impetuous division.

"*Hoorah pour Jack Ratbone!*" again and again. Verily, a new hero had arisen in the land!

Poor, maimed old Crapaud, who had so long held the blue ribbon of the local ice races for his sportive mistress, had been deposed, and "dat leetle chesnut plug" was the hero of the hour.

*Le roi est mort! Vive le roi!*

Standing at the outskirts of the rapidly thinning crowd,



near to where Jack Rathbone, the biped, and Charley Ford were discussing the question of going home or staying to the ball at the widow's in the evening, there stood a somewhat dilapidated looking old *habitant*, apparently slightly overcome from gazing upon the wine when it is red. Indeed, from his appearance he might have been Bacchus himself in sufficiently characteristic and ante-diluvian habiliments.

He was rotund of form, round of face and rubicund of complexion. He was dressed in a large, brownish-grey home-spun overcoat with *capuschon* and red seams, which was fastened about his obese waist with what is known as a rainbow sash—one of many striped colors. He wore long-legged shoepacs, into the legs of which his ample trousers were stuffed, and on his head, pulled as far down over his ears as it would go, was a much-worn muskrat skin cap. His beard was normally grey, but that portion of it immediately below his capacious mouth was bronzed with the burnished hue produced by the trickling of much "black-strap" tobacco juice.

He had backed the Widow Martin's Crapaud!

He had lost! Aye, *Sapristi*, every sou he had in the world! And now he felt like an impecunious *veurien*.

He could only abandon himself to grief and vain discomfoting regrets.

He came to the race in good time in the morning with a superabundance of confidence in Crapaud's capacity to shut out Peter Bertrand's colt in the first heat, and the whole of one dollar away down in his inside pants' pocket.

One half of this capital he had bet on the old horse with a friend of his, a Windsor butcher; the other half he had

put down inside of himself. At least he had started it in a downward direction all right enough, but from the way he felt he strongly suspected that some of it must have circulated around until it found lodgement in his head. He felt so top heavy, and things—men and sleighs and horses—seemed so jumbled up and unsteady on their pins.

He could see better with one eye shut, but *Mon Dieu!* *Mon Dieu!* how thirsty he was! If he could only get one drink of *boisson* it would straighten him right up, and then he could take his *congé* and go right away home.

*Mais un petit fillais avant de partir* was *absolument nécessaire!*

Ah! Who was that sitting in that fine cutter over there? He would shut one eye and take a good look. Aw, *voilà!* It was the Windsor butcher, who had won his fifty cents! The man who had reduced him at once to the ignominious condition of a disappointed *Canadien Français*, and a thirsty pauper! Suppose he went over and congratulated the butcher upon having won his fifty cents. Wonder if he'd take the hint? Perhaps he might, and if he did he'd ask him to drink with him, and pay for it with his (Bacchus') own alienated fifty cents. At all events, there would be no harm in trying the experiment. "*Allons! En avant! Ho!*"

Sat the butcher in a fashionable, well-appointed Portland cutter, with a wolf skin robe pulled high up, and closely tucked in about his burly form.

In the shafts before him, quietly stood pretty Butcher Maid, brown of coat and speedy of gait.

The butcher's good-natured face is suggestive of cherubs and good things to eat, with an occasional glass of "bittah

beeah" thrown in, while the mare and sleigh bring back to memory many happy reminiscences of pleasant rural drives and hair breadth 'scapes in dashes for the lead on Detroit's Lafayette avenue.

"Hallo Porteur! (hic)" said our thirsty supporter of Cra-paud, as he balanced up towards the cutter, "Ah guess you ween dat monnah, ay?"

"What money, boss?" enquired this knight of the block and cleaver, as he turned his head from a knot of admirers he had been talking to and gazed upon Bacchus.

"Why dat monnah you wus bet (hic) wit me!"

"Let me see," ruminated Sir Knight, "how much was it Boss?"

"(Hic) Feeftay cen! (hic.)"

"Oh, sugar! fifty cents, ay, boss?"

"Yas (hic), an bah gosh! (hic) dat's buss me!"

"Bust you, ay? Well, that's too bad; but you're not going to kick about it, are you boss?"

"Keek about eet (hic)," indignantly exclaimed Bacchus as he steadied himself by grasping the side of the cutter.

"What you took me (hic) for? No sirree Monsieur! (hic.)"

"You're no quitter are you?" queried Sir Knight seriously.

"No sair, ah'm no queeteur! (hic) Ah nevaire fleesh undair (hic) de flag Breeteesh, lac ole Charllo Deedeen wus use ter say."

"That's right," approvingly exclaimed the owner of Butcher Maid, "I always thought you were a stayer boss!"

"Aw, yas, hevery tam! (hic) you's bet, *mais* Porteur, (hic) Ah goan toll you wan ting (hic)."

"What's that, Boss?"

"Well, bah gosh, (hic) Ah wus mighty dry, dat's a fac! (hic)" whispered Bacchus confidentially.

"Dry are you?"

"Yas, jews lac powder horn."

"Well, get right in here Boss," said Sir Knight as he let the robe down and moved to make room for the "powder horn" on the seat along-side him, "we'll drive over to the widow's and I'll buy a drink."

"What! you wus goan treet me?" queried Bacchus, his face lighting up with a momentary flash of pleasurable anticipation, mingled with satisfaction at the rapidly successful result of his little scheme.

"Why of course," replied the jolly knight, "what do you take me for? I'm no hog!"

"Oh, no, Monsieur Porteur! you wus no hog (hic) fur sure," exclaimed Bacchus as he scrambled in beside the other, "but you wuss fuss class butcher dough. *Hoorah! Hoorah pour nous autres!*" and as Butcher Maid rapidly headed towards the widow's hostelry, he scratched off his seedy old muskrat cap, and waving it aloft at the dispersing crowd again gave vent to his superabundant satisfaction in repeated cheers for "*nous autres*," and the assurance, "Ah nevaire fleesh undeur de flag Breeteesh. Am no queeteur! (hic) Dat's de kin ov a mans Ah am, bah gosh! (hic) Ain't eet Monsieur Porteur? Yep! Yep!"

Thus the beautifully bright and dazzling day was drawing to its early close.

So much time had been consumed in the appointment of mutually acceptable judges, and the satisfactory settlement of other preliminaries before the horses started in the match ( between the heats of which several impromptu scrub races had been allowed to take place ), that by the time the Falstaffian Judge Badeeshow delivered himself of his final mandate, the blazing sun was rapidly nearing his southern resting place beneath the glowing red horizon.

And now, the shadows having attained their maximum length, the shades of evening were fast stealing on, and as the southwest wind freshened and wafted a colder temperature from off the bosom of the vast frozen lake, Old Sol bid his last adieu to the memorable day, which marked the defeat of the Widow Martin's famous pacing pony, Crapaud, by Peter Bertrand's chestnut colt on the ice on Lake St. Clair.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Widow's Ball.*

**J**ACK RATHBONE had been persuaded into remaining over for the widow's ball, much against his own better judgement, knowing as he did that the mythical Jessie, who had so excited the curiosity of the girls on the quarter stretch, would impatiently await him at the paternal mansion, armed *cap-a-pie*, if he did not show up there, figuratively speaking, ere curfew sounded lights out that night.

But the persuasive eloquence of Charley Ford and the blandishments of his acquaintances among the young ladies, to say nothing of his sympathy for the sportive widow in her bereavement and concern for poor old Crapaud, in his lamentable plight, were far too potent influences to successfully resist in his present frame of mind.

The christening and subsequent victory of his equine namesake had given him that sort of feeling of intense elation, which inspires to deeds of gallantry and disregard of consequences.

Charley Ford, in his pleadings that they should stop over for the dance, had said that Blanche Bertrand, Peter's vivaciously pretty daughter, had assured him that if he didn't remain over to it she would get her father to withdraw from the pony Jack Rathbone's name, and call him after some more obliging personage.

To this Jack answered, "Oh, shaw! I'll bet Peter wouldn't do that. Why, I have, ah—ay—" and he was just going to mention his promise of the horse blanket, but he checked himself in time, as the thought flashed upon him that it had best be left unsaid, else his very much magnified honor might be belittled into a very empty affair, indeed.

Boy like, he felt embarrassed, and he was conscious of the blood tingling in his cheeks and ears, as evincing his discomfiture; while the gathering suspicion that he was a very near approach to a fraud, began to assert itself upon his inner ideality.

But this, of course, was purely due to the fact of his still being a comparatively unsophisticated boy, unacquainted with this fleeting show's methods of the why and the wherefore of the bestowal of honors.

If he lived to some day become a politician and had a "doubtful" constituency in congress or parliament offered him, he would have to get bravely over any maudlin sentimentality or pricks of conscience in respect of the purchase of earthly honors before he could judiciously accept the proffer.

Peradventure he might some day get to understand that his promise of the horse blanket, provided Peter named the little chestnut after him, was a transaction strongly typical of well-nigh every phase of relationship in life, and that the fundamental plank in the platform of modern social ethics is that you shall scratch my back if I scratch yours!

Albeit Master Jack Rathbone had not as yet become acquainted with the process of Time's tempering crucible as afforded by daily contact with men and things in the real

battle of life, he was, none the less, from the fountain of his better "organism undefiled," moved to feel somewhat conscience stricken when it first flashed upon him that the fancied honor recently conferred upon him by the guileless Peter Bertrand was simply a purchased bit of empty immaterialism.

Still he withheld any reference to the horse blanket and wound up his unfinished reply to Charley Ford's chaff in respect of Blanche Bertrand's threat as to the change of the pony's name by saying, "Oh never mind, I'll tell you about it some other time."

"But you've made up your mind to stop for the ball, haven't you old chap?" persuasively queried the festive Mr. Ford.

"Oh, yes, I'll stop, but I know that my doing so means the devil to pay when I get home. You know how down the governor has been on me of late, and I know that when he finds out that I have been here at all to-day he'll want to annihilate me."

"Well he's sure to find that out," remonstrated the other, "and you might as well be killed for a sheep as a lamb. I know that my mother will be as mad as a meat ax when she realizes that I am not to be home to-night to go to church with her in the morning, as I invariably do every Sunday, as you know when I'm in the city but I should have been prepared to risk a good deal rather than miss this ball to-night. I'm sure we're going to have a great time and lots of fun."

"Well I dare say *you'll* enjoy yourself," replied Jack dismally, "because you go in strong for girls' society, but



I'm blowed if it isn't a bore half the time to me to be among the petticoats. The only girl I care about meeting and talking to in the city is that fat, ungainly specimen of incipient womanhood, Emily Ritter. "

"Emily Ritter!" exclaimed Charley deprecatingly, "you might well describe her as an ungainly specimen of womanhood! She's my abomination, and whenever I see that lovely little sister Grace of yours and she together, the story of the beauty and the beast always suggests itself. "

"Yes, I quite agree with you that there's a great contrast between the two, but then Emily's got more wit and fun in her little finger than any other girl I ever met possessed in her whole composition."

"She's got a long tongue, if that's what you mean!" snapped Mr. Ford, with keen recollections of Miss Ritter's capacity for caustic chaff.

"Yes, and it's as witty as it is long," smilingly observed Jack.

"Well, you're welcome to her, tongue and all," laughingly remarked Charley, as he hurried away to join the bevy of girls in the large box-sleigh, who were anxiously awaiting his report of the result of his conference with Jack in reference to their remaining for the ball.

This conversation had taken place at the track on the ice just after the race was over, and now evening had come, and for Jack Rathbone the active ephemeral enjoyment of this expedition was over; but he would stop at all hazards and endeavor to make himself agreeable and enter into the spirit of the ball.

Yet the all-pervading feeling he had within him that he

was doing that which he should not do, by not going home at once, would continually struggle for supremacy with his desire to enjoy himself.

And it was in this negative frame of mind, begotten of these conflicting feelings, that he sat down to a sumptuous supper of fresh fish and new-laid eggs, and an endless variety of pies, cakes, jams and *confitures*, which well-nigh hid the immaculate table cloth from view.

The dining room was to be the ball room of the evening, and after the repast the chairs and dining table were removed, and a large, empty, square deal box, brought in from outside, placed in the northeast corner of the room, and a solitary chair put thereon for the band.

The band was a poek-marked, ruddy-faced little Frenchman, with onion-like looking eyes that never blinked but stared, not unkindly, at anything and everything they fastened themselves upon with imperturbable absorption.

He was evidently a man of great good-nature, and inclined to take life pleasantly, as the mischievous smile which played about the capacious orifice, which served the purposes of a mouth in the feeding of a corpulent stomach and abdomen, would seem to indicate.

He was a rural fiddler by profession, and an imbiber of strong fluids whenever opportunity offered. He had had a successful day in the latter capacity to-day, and he was now disposed to be jocund, not to say hilarious.

On first entering the ball room from the bar, after a modest little "Hoop, la! Yep, Yep!" he proceeded to shuffle his shoepacked feet in a sort of *pas seul*, until his

breathings suggested the exhaust outside of an over-charged steam engine.

This, however, was soon put a stop to by the widow, who swooped down upon him and marched him off to the rostrum in the northeast corner, from whence he was told not to move, but to tune up and make ready for the first quadrille.

"Bah gosh! Meesses," he gasped in remonstrance, "Ah nevaire see nobody lac you beefor! You wus all detam stop it a feller from anjy heemseff."

"*Taisez vous!*" exclaimed the widow peremptorily, as she stamped her foot upon the floor, and then to Jack Rathbone, who had just now approached her, she said with an affectation of temper and scorn, as she pointed her finger at the gasping orchestra, "Monsieur Ratbone dat ees de moss trooblesome, ole wortless ting datscome about mah house!"

"What!" exclaimed the band as with difficulty he rose from the chair on the box upon which he had that instant sat down, "What! you calls me wortless ole ting does you Meeses? Well bah gosh! den you kin git someboday helse to play for dees dance!" and as he proceeded to descend from the rostrum he added, "eef Ah wus wortless ole ting, mah moosique muss be wortless too, bah gosh!" As he was about to deposit his fiddle and bow in their pine deal box Jack Rathbone took him in hand and by dint of much persuasion and the gift of a silver dollar induced him to remain and tune up.

This operation of tuning up by a rural fiddler is by no means a matter of small importance to be hurried over per-

functionarily. Its duration much depends upon the temper of the fiddler and the tenacity of the cat-gut involved.

If the former is out of temper the latter will fail of the requisite tenacity for the occasion and the absorption of much time is the inevitable result.

In this instance the fiddler was ruffled, and the cat-gut manifestly in sympathy with his perturbed mental and moral condition.

As he assayed to see-saw each string up or down to cord with tooth-edged, soul-disturbing discord he audibly muttered to himself, "call me wortless ole ting eh? Ah goan show heur eef Ah wus wortless ole ting *ou* no! Ah wus glad she wus beat to-day! Serve heur raght, bah gosh! Calls me wortless ole ting eh? Waugh!" and away would go a string with a startling snap as if in resounding harmony with these vengeful mutterings.

Then after grunting and perspiring the patched cat-gut back into place again, he would slowly and deliberately, and with oscillating under jaw screw it up again, and resume his direful mutterings in respect of the widow, until another snap of the string and a vehement point of exclamation was reached—and so on, *da capo*.

Meanwhile the guests of the evening were rapidly arriving—among them Peter Bertrand, who had come to chaperone his pretty daughter Blanche, and as he confidentially communicated to Jack, "shook mah foot lac Ah use to do when Ah wus young mans."

"Well, but you're not old Peter," remonstrated Jack, "you don't look more than forty."

"Fortay! Aw, *Bon Dieu!* Ah hav moss twentay year

more as dat! Jews bout de sam age as de Widday Martin hav."

"Well, the widow doesn't look more than forty-five."

"Aw, yas, she doan look much oler dan dat *Mais* she's hav bout feeftay-faf *ou* feeftay-seex year hole."

"I'll bet she doesn't feel more than forty," remarked Jack.

"No, sair; sometam Ah guess she doan feel more dan sixteen," said Peter with a chuckle; "but she say she have geeve hup dancin. You see eef she have geeve hup dancin *ou* no beefor dees ball ees ovaire," and Monsieur Bertrand winked portentously at his youthful auditor. "Eef she doan dance wit me, Ah goan toll heur dat she was mad acose Ah have beat heur to-day; an you see eef she not goan dance wit me den. Ah toll you de widday wus spun-kay," and he moved his head slowly back and forth in admiring commendation of the widow's pluck.

"Did you get home with the pony all right?" enquired Jack.

"What, wit Jack Ratbone?" Bah gosh, Monsieur Jack, yo nam mac fuss class nam for a horse, aint eet?"

"Well, I don't know," replied the youth smiling; "but at all events I hope it won't prove an unlucky one for either yourself or the little horse."

"Oh, you need not fear of dat; de nam wus all raght. Everyboday on de veillage know dat wus hees nam now, too. You see we have go home wit flyin couleur, and everyboday wus cry, 'Hoorah *pour* Jack Ratbone!' Some ov our byes, you know, have fetch wit dem a lot of dem small, square flag dey use on celebration days, and dey have stuck wan

ov dem on bote side ov de bridle ov de ponay and four more on de harness on hees back, an de driver have fassen wan beeg new broom to de dash board, and den we wus to drav trough de veellage at a pootay livelay gait, follored bah long percession ov all kin ov reeg—cutteur, cariole, new fashon, ole fashon, evray kine of sleigh wus dare! Ah toll you, de people wus excite! You orter see dem run hout ov dar house and cheer as we pass by. De womans wave dare hankfeesh, an de chillen hoorah loud's dey can't."

"You see," confidentially added Peter as he lowered his voice to a whisper, "some ov de fokes roun here doan tink much ov de widday. Dey ses she wus too much lac a mans, an eet wus not raght dat she keeps a fass horse."

"Oh, shaw!" exclaimed Jack, earnestly, "I don't see anything wrong in her keeping a fast horse if it suits her to do so."

"Needer me!" cried Peter, vehemently; "Ah honlay was toll you what some udder fokes ses."

"Yes, I know," replied his young city friend; "but I'd tell all such people to go to the devil and mind their own business!"

"Aw, dare ees de widday now!" interrupted Peter, as his eye fell upon the hostess just as she entered the door from the kitchen. "You see Ah goan mak heur open de ball wit me," and, accompanied by Jack, who was curious to see the result of this gallant determination, he made his way to the widow.

Jack was the first to speak. He said: "Mrs. Martin, Peter has just been telling me that if you don't honor him

by opening the ball with him, he'll think it's because you are mad because he beat you on the ice to-day.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the relict of the late Ebenezer the Second, "Pierro kin go to grass. Ah aint dat kine ov a womans, an mah dancin day wus ovaire long ago. Mad wit heem, *par exemple!* *Quel absurdite!*" and she laughed again more heartily than before.

"Well," interposed the owner of "dat leetle chesnut plug," "you need not to laugh lac dat Meesses! *Ma foi* eef you doan dance de fust dance wit me Ah goan tink you wus mad wit me!"

"Aw, *vatan donc*," exclaimed the widow, assuming the scornful "*Est tu fou?*"

"Aw yas, praps Ah wus fool," replied Peter, "*mais* Ah knows what kin of a womans you was!"

"Yas, well, what kin of a womans you tink Ah wus den?"

"Ah tink you wus beetaire an foole of vengeance agin folks when dey doan let you ride over dem!" and Mr. Bertrand with solemn countenance winked an aside wink at Jack as if he would say, "you'll see if that don't fetch her to trumps!"

"*Ah Pierro mon homme!*" and the widow's straightened, olive-hued features blended into a melancholy smile, "Ah have always taught you wus wan ov mah good fren! Ah deed not tink you would say dat bout me! De honlay ting Ah reegret an wus sorry fur to-day wus de anjuray mah pore ole Crapaud have meet wit, an you hurts me when you ses Ah wus foole of vengeance!"

"Oh, Ah doan want hurt you!" apologetically exclaimed

Peter, "nutting lac dat for sure! Ah onlay wants to dance wit you!"

"Yes," interposed Jack, "and you had better dance with him Mrs. Martin! Open the ball with Mr. Bertrand, and you'll find that everything will go off pleasantly for the rest of the evening.

"Eut," remonstrated the widow, "Ah doan know dem new dance."

"*Mais* you knows how to dance a two-han reel," cried Peter, "acose Ah remembraire you wus de bess dancer een dees part ov de conetray tirty year ago!"

"Ah yas, tirty year ago! *mais* Ah wus too ole fur dat now!"

"Too ole!" indignantly exclaimed Mr. Bertrand with an intonation of trembling scorn, "Too ole! Why, bah George! Ah weel bet ten dollair to fav cent dat you wus younger dan half de gell een dees room now!"

This was too much for Crapaud's plucky and sportive owner.

"Well Ah goan try a two-han reel wit you den," she said, as with a playful smile lighting up her comely countenance she took Mr. Bertrand's arm to go over and instruct Monsieur le Professeur Moyees Duplessis, which was the domestic name and professional title in which the band rejoiced, to attune his instrument for a reel as the initial dance of the evening. The professor had by this time dissolved a considerable modicum of his avoirdupois into a wreaking perspiration, which streamed from every pore of his face and hands and dropped off the end of his nose in plenteous drops, redolent of whisky and black strap tobacco.



This, however, seemed to have the effect of smoothing his ruffled feathers, and when, after a few final sonorous scrapings of his freshly-resined bow across the now accorded strings, he burst forth into the Arkansas Traveler as a sort of introductory overture, his face wore an unmistakable smile of inane beatitude.

The Arkansas Traveler was the modern *piece de resistance* of Monsieur Duplessis' *repertoire*—the Arkansas Traveler in its entirety—both the first as well as the second part, the execution of which, by the peripatetic "strawnger," so delighted Davy Crocket, of historic and dramatic memory.

Modern melody might, perchance, have produced a tune more calculated to inspire to deeds of terpsichorean prowess; but if it had, Mons. le Professeur had as yet failed to discover it and in the execution of the always popular, grotesque old air, as a rural fiddler proved himself no mean performer.

This finished, he held his upright fiddle on his left knee, and his perpendicular bow on his right, and called out in a voice of command, "Took yo pardneur fur de fus kad-dreel."

"No, no, Paul!" interposed Peter, as he approached the orchestral throne with the mischievously smiling widow leaning upon his arm, after she had transformed her black dress into a costume more picturesquely appropriate for the occasion by tucking up a *la draperie* the outer skirt thereof and displaying a scarlet Balmoral petticoat, and a not unshapely pair of feet and ankles; "*Pas un quaddreel s'il vous plait, Paul!* Me an de Meesses, and hany wan else dats

want to jine een, wus goan dance a two-han reel *a la vielleux fasson!*"

"What you say?" exclaimed the astonished band; "you an de Meesses wus goan dance two-han reel *a la vielleux fasson?*"

"Yas, dat's what we goan do," assented Peter, positively.

"*Eh bien bonte comme je sius content!*" and then in a louder, jubilant voice he called out: "Ladies an gensee-mans, took yopardneur fur an two-han reel *a la vielleux fasson*, an Ah goan play you someting dat's goan mac yo shook yo foot, whedder you wants to *ou* yo doan wants to! *Revielle donc mes amis!*" with which enjoiner he fell to tuning up again with greasy satisfaction.

The announcement of a reel as the opening dance was an innovation upon the customary programme on such occasions, and for the moment, somewhat disappointed and chilled the youthful ardor of the expectant dancers, who, pending the prolonged tuning struggle of the professor with his refractory fiddle strings, had been promenading the floor in impatient, albeit joyous couples. But all feeling of momentary discontent soon made way for a good-naturedly, eager curiosity, as the brawny Peter and comely widow faced each other with arms akimbo ready for the ancient terpsichorean fray.

"Come on, some ov you fokes, an jine een." supplicated Monsieur Bertrand. But no one responded to this appeal, and he and his sportive partner were left sole occupants of the middle of the floor, around which was formed a circle of gay and festive participants in this one of the widow's more memorable balls.

As they stood there, this well-dressed Herculean specimen of French Canadian manhood, and interesting, low browed, raven haired, well formed widow, surrounded by a *cordon* of intently happy faces in this low ceiled room, dimly lighted by the rays of bracket lamps, hung in the centre of three of the four walls thereof, and presided over by the rural fiddler perched upon his rostrum in the northeast corner, the scene suggested one of Vandyke's realistic dreams upon canvas or perhaps better, a scene from one of Moliere's plays.

As Monsieur Duplessis with beaming, albeit shiningly greasy countenance, and the measured palpitation of his right foot in jerky resonance, sawed out the inspiring bars of an old fashioned reel, the inaugural dance of the Widow Martin's ball began.

There certainly are things impossible of description, and the tuneful gyrations of the human form divine in an old fashioned reel must be one of them. At all events, it is so with this stubby little pencil in the inexperienced hands of its latest owner.

It, however, goes without saying, that the opening dance at this especially auspicious ball at the Widow Martin's tavern, on the shores of Lake St. Clair, was a huge success, and loud were the plaudits of the assembled merry-makers at the festive widow's power of endurance as she continued her timely and fantastic steps after her burly partner, from an affected exhaustion had sunk, laughing and very much blown, to the floor.

"Ha, ha," gasped the widow, as she came to a palpitating stand after a final *pirouette* of wondrous agility; "you could beat mah pore ole Crapaud on de hicc dees afternoon, but

you coo'nt hole a cannell to hees meestress cn dees floor to-night," to which Peter, in breathless accents, and shaking with good-natured laughter as he lay prone upon the floor, replied, "Ah geeve up! Ah geeve up! You was too many for me Madame—Whew! Ah'm moss dead!"

"Bravo! Bravo! dat wus de bess ting Ah nevaire see fur long tam!" shouted the band enthusiastically, as, with one final, discordant swoop of his bow he tucked his fiddle under his left arm, and descending from the orchestral throne proceeded to elbow his way through the hilarious crowd to the triumphant widow.

He seized her limp, unresisting hand, and shaking it demonstratively, in tones of admiration exclaimed, "Bravo! Bravo! Madame! bah gosh, eef you is'nt good wan! Dat wus de bess ting Ah've not see for more dan twentay year, an Ah goan forgeeve you for what you have call me jews now!"

"Dat's all raght, Moyees!" replied the panting hostess, "Dat's all raght! Go on de bar and tell Albert to geeve you a dreenk on mah espense," which enjoinder the perennially thirsty band, now entirely restored to good humor, at once proceeded to carry out.

Meanwhile, Peter had arisen from the floor, and under a fire of good-natured badinage from the laughing crowd of gay onlookers, followed Monsieur Duplessis to the tap room to cool off, and superintend the liquid provisioning of that worthy's inner man.

This done the professor, under the close surviellance of a *coterie* of eager young gallants, was soon made to return and resume his perch upon the rostrum, and as he took his seat,

he wiped his face with a much used red bandanna handkerchief, and in commanding tones called out "Hoorah boy! We weel now beegeen de noo fashon style to dance! Took yo pardneur for de fuss kaddreel!"

Like the initiatory reel, this first quadrille, too, was a grand success. Jack Rathbone, with the pretty Blanche Bertrand for a partner, danced *vis a vis* to Charley Ford, and the gushing Rosalie—the widow's fair daughter—while the remainder of this and the other sets on the floor were made up of gay and good-natured couples of the *beaux esprits* and fair daughters of the neighborhood.

Right merrily did the evening grow on apace, and the *abandon* and *bon homie* engendered by the widow and Peter Bertrand's old-time opening reel continued to pervade every incident of the memorable occasion until the midwinter's night closely trenched upon another Sabbath morn.

## CHAPTER VII.

*A Turkey Gobbler Parent—An Embarrassing Son and Heir—A Retrospect—An Apology For a Hero, Etc.*

**A**LBEIT a prosperous merchant, Mr. Robert Rathbone was a man of many and variously uncertain moods in respect of his social and domestic entity.

Emily, his eldest daughter, recently married to an officer in the United States army and gone with her husband to sojourn at one of the far western military posts, understood him thoroughly. He had been very much averse to her marrying an American military man at the outset, but this intimate understanding of him diplomatically taken advantage of, had, in the end, changed his opposition into acquiescence.

Shortly before her marriage, Miss Rathbone had said to her mother, during one of their confidential confabs before the slowly dying grate fire in the dining room after the others of the family had retired, one night: "You know, mamma, I wouldn't be one bit surprised at anything papa might do at any time. Of course, you know, I mean within a due observance of law and order, and all that sort of thing. He seems so influenced by the mood he happens to be in for the time being. And so whimsical! Why, mamma, he's just like a great, big, overgrown school-boy in some things, and his temper is so variable and uncertain, that one never can tell what he's going to do next."

"My dear, my dear," remonstrated the placid little mother, "you shouldn't talk that way of your father."

"Well, you know, mamma, that what I say is true!"

"That doesn't matter, dear, if it does happen to be true. In fact, it makes it far worse if what you say is true. It's not at all nice to hear a grown-up child commenting ill-naturedly upon her parent's weaknesses."

"Oh, mamma! you mustn't think that I said what I did ill-naturedly. Oh, no! not at all. I only mentioned what I know that you know is a fact."

"Well, my dear, even if it is a fact, that's the very reason you should say nothing about it, and endeavor to cover it up. My! Supposing you went to your father and talked to him of my manifold faults!"

"*Your* manifold faults! You stupid little mother, you!" and the incipient bride arose with a start from the easy chair in which she had lazily reclined, and going over to the little woman seated at the opposite side of the fire-place, she gushingly threw her arms about her neck in a throe of demonstrative affection.

"*Your* faults! Oh, you poor, dear, little, old, thing, you! as if you had any faults!" and seated upon the diminutive mater's lap, she kissed her again and again.

"Yes, my faults," repeated the mother, with a sad smile, as she tenderly stroked her eldest daughter's soft, brown hair. "I hope you'll endeavor to forget them after you are married, and only think of whatever few good qualities I may possess, when you are far away."

"Oh mamma, mamma, don't talk like that! you make me feel so wretched! The very thought of being far away from you and this dear old home makes me very unhappy!" and her pretty blue eyes grew dim with loving, regretful

tears as a premonitory symptom to the joint "good cry" this mother and daughter indulged in on this occasion while contemplating their early separation.

Yet though Mr. Rathbone, as a husband and father, was uncertain of temper and even at times whimsical he did periodically conduct himself in a commendably parental way and, in fact, so unbent and relaxed his sometimes stringent paternal and marital mandates, as to become for the time being a reasonably affectionate and indulgent head of a well regulated domestic household.

Howbeit there ever smouldered within his abnormally jealous breast the latent germs of a petty tyrant within the precincts of his own fold, to suppress which and avert a troublous irruption often required the diplomatic treatment, and defferentially judicious coddling of his ever patient wife and appreciative daughters.

To these two last, he was inclined at times to be if anything overindulgent, and in the long run they usually carried their point with him, as witness the ultimate marriage of the fair Emily to her handsome military *fiancee*.

It, however, may be said of Mr. Robert Rathbone that he was the sort of man one but too frequently meets with in the business places and counting houses, of large as well as small commercial centres, who take off their more obnoxious incongruities of character, and lay them upon the threshold of their domiciles on their departure for their offices in the morning of each working day, and resume them on their return with the hanging up of their hats in the entrance hall in the evening.

To the outside world he was ever the same self-possessed,



conciliatory business man, dignified and pre-eminently respectable withal—while within the confines of his own domestic hearth, he was the jealously tyrannical head of the family, whom to be unremittingly tabbied and coddled by the females of the household was as indispensable to his equanimity as was meat and drink to the proper preservation of his rotund, obese body.

Like many another Englishman, possessor of a patient, long-suffering wife, he treated her as a sort of incident to his creature comforts, and especially of the gastronomic department thereof.

He had been a very good looking man in his early manhood, about the medium height, with a light-haired, straight-featured, Saxon-like *ensemble*, and a pair of fishy-looking, light blue eyes, rather too much prone to staring absorbedly at given objects.

Upon his devoted and growing son and heir, Jack, these searching orbs now seldom rested with anything other than a fierce expression of questioning suspicion, not to say dislike.

In fact, if the theory of fore-ordination had been in active operation when Robert Rathbone made his *debut* upon this terrestrial sphere, it would have been well had it been arranged that in his capacity of husband and father, he should confine himself to the propagation of daughters.

To these, as has been said before, he was a fairly indulgent and affectionate parent.

But with his only son, John, his second born, he had latterly gotten to be the very opposite, and manifestly

increasingly so, as his heir-apparent approached his manhood.

Mr. Rathbone, in respect of his growing antipathy to his son, might have been likened unto a jealously aggressive and much inflated turkey cock.

It is said of these imperious birds, who are sharp enough to distinguish the individual sex of the growing young brood, that they will systematically, after the manner of Herod, peck and put to death all their male off-spring before they begin to gobble and strut about with elevated tails, and otherwise interfere with the old bird's supremacy as head of the domestic circle. In view of this ornithological peculiarity, if the Chinese theory as to the transmigration of souls be correct, then the soul of a turkey gobbler must have slipped aboard at the launching of Robert Rathbone's hull upon its terrestrial tour, and become its psychological and propelling motive power.

If a father at all (the desirability of which was altogether questionable) he was designed essentially to be rather a father of daughters than of sons.

The daughters, in their gushing defferential way, in more or less degree pandered to his vanity and aggrandized his importance as author of their beings. But the growing popularity and importance, in the esteem of his mother and sisters, of his only son, on the contrary, seemed to threaten a belittling of the father's importance in the household, or, at least, a division of the honors, comforts and other perquisites of the position of Tabbie-in-chief thereof.

It marriage with Robert Rathbone had proven a failure,

it had been because of his whimsically jealous temper and overbearingly selfish nature.

It would have been better had he never married at all—better for himself and better for his wife, whose real or fancied exploits as a society belle of the city previous to her marriage, and in fact previous to his having met her at all, he had allowed his vile imaginings to manufacture into a phantom of ever lurking jealousy.

While his son Jack was a small boy in knickerbockers and jacket, he was proud of his good looks and precocious sayings, and gratified with the sense of proprietary he felt when he looked at him.

But as the boy grew older and gradually developed into a tall, fair-haired, good-looking specimen of incipient manhood, the gnawing phantom of suspicion, which haunted him in his morbid moods, caused him to discover a marked likeness twixt the handsome youth and his wife's one-time girlhood lover, Gustavus Ford.

This Gustavus Ford, now long since dead, had been a dashing young gallant, conspicuous at all the better class social gatherings in the fashionable quarters of the town, while Robert Rathbone, yet unmindful of aught else save business progress, plodded on as clerk for the firm he had engaged with on his first arrival in the city.

Mr. Ford had subsequently given the local Mrs. Grundies large cause for gossip by unexpectedly eloping with the only daughter and only child of one of Detroit's richest citizens at a time when it was very generally supposed he was shortly going to marry the pretty and popular little Miss La Tourneau.

The flight of the fugitives rendered society aghast for the time being, but it proved to be only the proverbial nine days' wonder with the F. F's. of the little city, and, like all else in this fleeting kaleidoscopic life, was soon forgotten when the truant couple, forgiven by the bride's parents returned home to assume their surreptitiously obtained responsibilities to themselves and to society.

Mr. Ford was a lawyer by profession, and, aided by his now influential associations as husband of an heiress to a large fortune, and son-in-law to a distinguished citizen in a large way of business, his native wit and brilliant talents soon secured for him a conspicuously commanding position at the state bar.

But while his professional life grew in prosperity, his inner domestic life year by year waxed proportionately wretched and unenviable.

His perturbed and peripatetic honeymoon was not yet over ere he discovered that, on the impulse of the hour, he had allied himself, until death or the divorce court should separate them, with one whom he never could love or tenderly sympathize with.

At the outset of his married life, Mr. Ford's struggles for distinction at the bar were so absorbent of his thinking power, that his domestic surroundings and appurtenances received a very small modicum of his attention; but as the novelty of professional success gradually wore away, and the disenchanting circumstances of daily matrimonial contact with one to whom his heart would not and could not go out, month by month grew more and more trying, he chafed and fretted under the marital yoke.

He took to politics as a means of distracting his mind from the contemplation of this irrevocable cast of the dye, and, as at the bar—which, by the way, both in the States and Canada, constitutes the most prolific nursery for, and stepping stone to, the political arena—he met with marked acceptance.

But, though his short and brilliant career as a legislator was in every way agreeable to his ambition and soothing to his vanity, and for a time a seemingly effective panacea for the discords of his domestic situation, his struggles towards the summit of Parnassus, in the end inevitably proved themselves purely tentative and altogether ephemeral in their consequences.

For, incidentally to his success as a politician, he became a confirmed drunkard, though a quiet, melancholy and unobtrusive one. As a drunkard he came to his death, though the fact was not generally known to the outside world; and some ten years before the opening of this history he was quietly laid to rest in Elmwood cemetery, amidst an halo of general public regret, and the sincere lamentations of many friends, leaving behind him a rich widow and two bright-eyed little sons, "to mourn his loss," to use a much-worn and much-abused phrase.

On his death-bed Mr. Ford had sent a surreptitious message, through his devotedly forgiving, albeit too much neglected, wife, to Mrs. Rathbone, beseeching her to come to his dying bed-side, that he might, in bidding her a last adieu, make his peace in respect of that which had overshadowed his conscience as an all-pervading pall for many

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an unhappy hour during the heyday of his success at the bar, and his triumphs in the field of politics.

Mrs. Rathbone, unable to resist this melancholy appeal in fearful and trembling anticipation of the trying ordeal had gone, and an unwitnessed interview had taken place, which had so effected the tender-hearted wife of Robert Rathbone that in her subsequent effervescent feelings of grief and remorse, she had gushingly told her husband for the first time since their marriage the nature of her one time close intimacy with the dying man and of how much she had loved him in the days gone by.

A foolish, single-hearted, forgiving little woman this! but, in view of her more than ten years' experience of her jealously suspicious husband, how injudicious in this instance!

Looking at it from the standpoint of a conservator of Robert Rathbone's peace of mind, this was manifestly a case wherein the bliss of ignorance was incomparably better than the folly of overburdening wisdom.

Unquestionably it would have been better (in that it would have been the properly honest course to take under the circumstances) if at the outset of her encouraging acceptance of the attentions which led up to their marriage, she had told her future husband of the true character of her intimacy with Gustavus Ford.

But, having omitted the performance of this self-apparent duty at the proper time, it was little short of cruel to tell the unfortunate man so many years after the facts were at all reparable.

She had wanted to tell him at the proper time; and she had felt not unlike a guilty thief in not having unbosomed herself and trusted to his generosity to overlook anything in her girlhood intimacy with Gustavus Ford, which, from a strictly decorous point of morality, might have approached what could be properly called an indiscretion.

The probabilities are that had she possessed the very unusual faculty of at will transferring her affections from her first lover to her second serious suitor, she would have, without much difficulty, contrived to tell the latter of the true nature of her one-time intimacy with the former.

But it will be remembered that it was, from the outset, understood that the betrothal of Robert Rathbone and Miss Emily La Tourneau resulted in a very near approach to *un mariage de covenance*, in which the feminine heart involved was but a scarified, second-hand appendage; and with that feminine reticence, which is the invariable outcome of disappointed, outraged love, the affianced bride had, in the light of her experience as the erstwhile *fiancee* of Gustavus Ford, shrunk from the idea of entrusting the man she was about to marry with the knowledge he was justly entitled to in the forming of an opinion of her fitness to fill the post of a loving and loyal wife to him.

The dead man had not absolutely jilted her—that is to say, he had not, while engaged to her, taken French leave and clandestinely gone off with the prospectively rich girl he had made his wife.

Miss La Tourneau and the comparatively briefless young lawyer had been engaged to be married for well on to four years, and during that period had seen much of each other

in the close confidences of a betrothal intimacy, which, however, in keeping with the invariable experiences in most cases of protracted engagements, had been periodically visited with the temporarily fatuous storm of a lovers' quarrel.

For more than a dozen times had they at intervals during their lengthened engagement mutually rated each other in criminatory and recriminatory terms, and separated for the nonce with vehemently bitter words upon their lips—always however, again to come together in the ecstatic throes of that sweetest mutual forgiveness of reinvigorated love so aptly covered by a certain time-honored Latin proverb bearing upon the subject.

On the last occasion of these periodical outbreaks, which had originated with her lover uprading her in jealously angry terms for having danced too often and otherwise having rendered herself far too conspicuous with a certain eligible and popular man about town, a notorious flirt, Miss La Tourneau had given Mr. Ford his *congé* apparently as if she meant that their heretofore understanding, looking to their marriage so soon as his circumstances might warrant it, should cease and determine from that hour.

He had assured her, in bitterly resounding philippics, that he should take her at her word, and he had thus taken his departure from the La Tourneau domicile for the last time, untrammelled of his long existing plighted troth, to one, whom, in his subsequent morbid moods of mind, growing out of the real and fancied miseries of his ill assorted fugitive match, he had allowed himself to get to think that life was not worth living without?



Of course, coquettish woman-like, she had acted out her part, as if she really were in earnest when she unrelentingly dismissed him with a repellant cold good-bye; but she was only acting a part, and she confidently looked forward to a blissful restoration of peace and harmony again before the week was out.

However, in this anticipation she was somewhat shaken when on the evening following their angry separation a messenger brought her a coldly formal letter and a package from Gus (as she always called Mr. Ford), the latter containing her letters to him, a locket, and certain other little souvenirs she had from time to time given him throughout their protracted engagement.

This circumstance was considerably dampening to her coquettishly assumed indifference in the premises, but did not altogether rob her of her confidence in the ultimate resumption of their intimacy.

She promised herself that, in the course of a week or so, she would write Gus a letter acknowledging that she was to blame, and beg his forgiveness; and she felt, judging from past experience, that that would inevitably bring him to her feet again.

She, of course, knew where his office was situate, and she also knew that shortly after four o'clock on each week day he was usually to be seen going to the postoffice on Griswold street.

She had often met him between these two points in keeping with a previous understanding when they had arranged for one of their many charming little afternoon outings on the river, a stroll in Grand Circus Park, or a visit to one of

the matinees; and, for three consecutive, bright, afternoons, after arraying her graceful, little person in neatly, becoming attire, she had made it a point of being seen quietly walking, without an escort, along the route he was in the habit of taking. But all to no purpose!

Either he had gone out of the city, or she had too grievously offended him, and he was purposely keeping out of her way, in virtuous indignation.

She was becoming nervously fretful and subduedly cast down about it.

Had she met him on the street, she, of course, wouldn't have gone up to him and asked his forgiveness, and begged him to forget their quarrel.

Oh, no! She wouldn't have done that!

But she'd have bowed to him dignifiedly and with *empressement*, and stealthily taken especial note of the method and manner of his response, and regulated her subsequent course accordingly.

The truth was, that Miss Emily La Tourneau was becoming very unhappy, as a victim of that noxious feeling of remorse—the sure outcome of self-condemnation in all such instances.

What, then, must have been the bitterness of her sensations when, before she had contrived, at the sacrifice of her pride, to indite the letter begging his forgiveness and asking him to return to her, which she intended to send him, society was paralyzed by the announcement that Mr. Gustavus Ford, the young attorney, and the wealthy heiress, Miss Julia Perkins, had together taken flight from the city.

No one had ever known, but herself, how much she had

suffered under this death-dealing blow to all her tenderest and fondest, albeit coquettish, capacity for passionate love for a man.

The crucible of an agonized mingling of blighted love and soul-racking remorse, through which she had gone at this time, had so chastened, subdued and purified her of all coquettish tendencies, that in due course she grew to be fitted to become the faithfully loyal and patient wife of the methodical and exacting Robert Rathbone. She had not, as she should have done, told the latter the substance of all this before their marriage.

Thus their matrimonial barque had been launched upon life's treacherously uncertain sea, freighted down with all the burdening influences of an ante-marital secret

But under the influence which that death-bed, tressed interview with her one-time betrothed lover had upon her conscience and her nervous system, or perhaps in fulfillment of some last, dying, expressed wish of the dead man, in an *abandon* of hysterical grief and self-abnegation she had told her husband all that he properly should have learned from her own lips at the outset of their courtship.

It had happened on the evening of the day on which the death-bed meeting had occurred, after the children had gone to bed, leaving their father and mother alone seated on either side of a large centre table before a crackling, open, wood fire.

Mrs. Rathbone had introduced the subject of that which had secretively lain nearest her innermost being, as a pall upon her conscience, by putting down the fancy work she had nervously been attempting progress with and going

over to where her husband sat, reading his evening paper, she tremblingly knelt beside his easy chair, and buried her face upon the palms of her hands as they rested upon its arm.

"Robert dear," she had said beseechingly, without looking up at him, "put aside your paper for a few moments won't you please?"

"Why Emily, what is the matter?" he asked, rousing up and not unkindly putting aside the paper in a far better humor than usual. "I have noticed that you were out of sorts all the evening. Are you ill wife?" and he took her limp unresisting little hands in one of his and smoothed her bowed head unusually sympathetically, for him, with the other.

"No, not ill in the sense you mean, Robert," she had answered, beginning a burst of tears, "but I have got that to tell you of my life before we were married which you ought to have known before we became man and wife."

"You have?" exclaimed the husband with rising inflection of voice and kindling suspicion.

"Yes, dear," she replied with a trembling sob.

"And what is it at this late day you have to tell *me*?" and he emphasized the *me* with resounding vehemence. "What is there I *should* know, that I do not already know, of your life before our marriage?" he demanded, with hardening countenance.

"You know that Gustavus Ford died this afternoon, don't you, Robert?" she gushed forth amidst a volley of choking sobs.

"Yes! And, pray, what may Gustavus Ford's dying

this afternoon have to do with what happened to you before we were married?" he demanded, sternly.

"*Oh, Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*" she tearfully exclaimed, in subdued tones, as if communing and struggling with herself; and then, as if with a great effort, she steadied herself and answered: "Nothing, Robert, except that I was at one time engaged to be married to him."

"Is that all?" he queried, in a doubtingly questioning tone of voice.

"Y-e-s."

"Are you quite certain it is?" he almost shouted.

"Y-e-s, yes, Robert!"

"Well, then, if that is certainly all you have to tell me at this late day," he answered, after a short pause, in a less aggressive tone of voice, "I have only to say that, notwithstanding that you have heretofore withheld what you yourself now say I ought to have known before I became your husband, I have been for some time past aware of the humiliating fact that you would have been that drunken reprobate's wife, instead of mine, if he had not thought proper to jilt you!"

He jerked this out in spasms of irrepressible bitterness.

"No, Robert, you're mistaken, he did not jilt me," she tearfully objected, with a tremulous catching of the breath.

"Then, I suppose, he seduced you!" he venomously hissed forth, as he motioned to get up from his chair, which, however, she succeeded in preventing by throwing herself upon him and exerting her full strength in a fiercely supplicating manner.

"Oh, Robert! how dreadful that you should think or

say such a thing of your own wife!" she gasped, in her efforts to keep him seated in the chair.

"It is true, nevertheless, is it not?" he demanded, loudly.

"As Heaven is my witness, here upon my bended knees, Robert, I swear it is not!" and with tightly clasped, extended hands, and a large tear slowly coursing down each of her blanched cheeks, she gazed heavenward.

"Well, then," he exclaimed in a slightly lowered tone of voice, "why have you made this a mystery for all these years—practically living a lie for all this time, as you certainly have—by not having told me freely and unreservedly of all that had transpired between yourself and that dead inebriate?"

"Because I was a moral coward," she replied, hysterically, "and afraid that you would spurn and despise me as your wife."

"But, pray, what was to prevent your telling me before you became my wife, I'd like to know?"

"Because the wounds," she gasped, with a shudder, between her well-nigh suffocating sobs, "which my own folly had inflicted upon my wicked heart, were then too fresh to exhibit to anybody!"

"Your folly! your wounds! and your wicked heart! Why, what do you mean?"

To this she had replied by painfully giving him the burden of the particulars, already known to the reader, of the history and rupture of her one-time betrothal to the dead Gustavus.

"And now, Oh Robert," she had hysterically pleaded, as, rising from her kneeling posture beside him, she clingingly

struggled her arms about his neck, "in God's name, my husband, I implore your forgiveness for having withheld this from you for all these years. If you could but realize how much I have suffered because of the omission, I'm sure you would forgive me," and she squeezed his head against her tear-stained face in a suppliant throe of genuine contrition.

It was a remarkable, though not an uncommon thing in real life, that among several other contradictory peculiarities of this Robert Rathbone—this sternly exacting, jealous, domestic tyrant—was a susceptibility to woman's tears, but whether because of the impatient irritability they made him feel or of a not at all times discernible generosity, it would have been difficult to determine.

No matter in how towering a rage he might be, if for some especially aggravated cause, he had driven his wife to tears—rare things with her in her acquired evenness of temper and patient resignation—he had always been measurably quieted.

He had an abhorrence of a scene involving grief, and any manifestation of lachrymose sentimentality in man or woman, put him out of all patience, and caused him to pull himself inside of his coldly impenetrable dignity with the disgust of a thwarted snapping turtle.

It was this uninviting shell of dignity, mingled with an English taciturnity of pride, and a repugnance to admitting discomfiture in anything which had enabled him to assume ignorance of his wife's love experience with Gustavus Ford.

He had become aware of the facts in respect of it shortly after their marriage through a garrulous younger brother of

hers; and after a searching investigation (of course unknown to his wife), having become convinced that nothing absolutely criminal had ever taken place between the erstwhile lovers, he had held his peace.

Howbeit from the information so obtained, there had incontinently germinated a shadowy, all-pervading phantom which got into the way of mounting guard over his morbidly jaundiced secret broodings.

Now, however, that he had heard the long withheld story from his wife's own trembling lips, a transfiguration had forthwith taken place.

The aforesaid shadowy phantom, instead of vaporizing into the ethereal blue of unclouded confidence, from that hour gradually assumed the impalpable proportions of a full fledged skeleton, destined periodically to stalk abroad with discordant and disturbing footfall amidst the *lares* and *penates* of the Rathbone domestic household, having its habitat within the proverbial closet thereof.

The transformation which had thus taken place, it will therefore be understood, had been inaugurated on that memorable evening, before the crackling, open wood fire in the favorite little sitting room of the Rathbone mansion, when the head of the establishment negatively forgave his suppliant, tear-stained little wife on the evening of the day which marked the death of Gustavus Ford.

Mayhap if the now freed spirit of the dead man had continued in the flesh, the metamorphosis would never have taken place.

Is there not such a thing as greater jealousy of the dead than of the living?



Is it a rare thing in this wretched round of misery of ours, called life, that the peace of mind of the living should be put to flight by the *post mortem* developments in respect of a deceased, one-time lover—one's predecessor in the changeful affections of the living relict, as for instance?

At all events, it was in this way that the death of his wife's girlhood lover affected the morbidly jealous misgivings of Robert Rathbone.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Vagaries of a Domestic Skeleton, and One of the Results of a Mixed Marriage.*

THE READER, gentle or otherwise, would seem to be entitled to an apology for the "ancient history" in respect of these chronicles perpetrated in the last chapter.

The retrospect, however, seemed indispensable to a proper understanding of the *raison d'être* of the Rathbone domestic skeleton; and in that there would be but little left herein to record that that grimly immaterial ogre had not something, directly or indirectly, to do with the digression, will, perhaps, be kindly condoned.

Domestic skeletons, both material and immaterial, are like race horses; they "go" in all shapes, and, the proverb to the contrary notwithstanding, their abode is not necessarily always within the mysterious cubbie-hole or secret closet of the family habitation.

In this instance the abiding-place of the Rathbone skeleton was largely within the jaundiced imagination of Robert Rathbone; and although its *raison d'être* was seemingly based upon a wholly insufficient and unwarrantable foundation, on occasion it was wont to swoop forth and do yeoman's service as a despoiler of the peace and harmony of the Rathbone family. At one time during the earlier period, after its incubation, its favorite object of attack was the alleged priestly influence the wife was subject to; and

any marked attention, however conventionally correct, shown by a gentleman acquaintance to the long-suffering little woman invariably caused an ominous rattling of impalpable bones and a discordant clanking of jealous marital chains within the inner domestic sanctum. These two erstwhile, ever-fertile causes of the skeleton's depredations upon the happiness and contentment of the family were, in due course, largely lived down by reason of the imperturbable amiability of the little wife and mother, coupled with her diplomatic management of her exacting lord and master.

Robert Rathbone, voluptuary that he had gotten to be of late years, had gradually grown to regard his wife as a sort of female butler and caterer to his household, and coddler-general to his increasingly obese person.

Upon his wife's staff in the latter capacity his two daughters had of late proven themselves effective aids, but not so his unfortunate son and heir, Jack.

Around and about this adventurous youth there now hovered—ever upon mischief bent—all the portentous promptings of a green-eyed, abnormal imagination.

Many a Machiavelian stroke of policy and *finesse* had Mrs. Rathbone and the girls perpetrated in the interests of their beloved Jack within these last two years.

Often had his banishment from the household been threatened in the privacy of the parental bedroom; but, thanks to the diplomatic methods of the mother and sisters, up to this time nothing had been openly enunciated in respect of what disposition there was to be made of him.

Things certainly could not continue as they had done for the year last past.

Within the last eighteen months the comparatively small boy had merged into a well-developed youth now upon the verge of manhood; and his father's apparent indifference of him at the outset of that period, had now grown into a feeling closely trenching upon an active and progressive dislike.

He had never been a bad boy, though from a strictly ethical point of view, he had perhaps not been an especially good one. He had unquestionably been what is commonly known as a generously good-natured, wild boy; but his wildness chiefly consisted in the practice of those sports and pastimes his father had actively encouraged him in a fondness for when he was an urchin.

He was much given to shooting and fishing, and in the prosecution of these sports had occasionally overstepped the limits of parental discipline, but not to any heinous extent.

He was passionately fond of horses, and as has been shown, an enthusiastic votary of any kind of horse racing, but in this he was only following the example of his father, who himself was a warm supporter of the turf and a member of the local trotting association.

He had a predilection for game fowls, which his father too had at one time encouraged him in the breeding of.

With something of credit to his discernment as a judge of the points of a cock, he had gone through the "rooster swapping" period of early boyhood with not a little *eclat* among his contemporary small boys who had cocks to barter and exchange. Later on he had been generally

recognized by local cock fanciers, as an appreciative *connoisseur* of what constituted a good bird.

This reputation had led him into frequent temptations to surreptitiously attend the occasional cocking mains held in the neighborhood, and it must be reluctantly confessed that he had two or three times been inveigled into giving away to the same, but always with a negative sort of gratification. Each time he had gone to witness a battle he had felt like an outlaw (as in truth he was) while the so-called sport was in progress, and a guilty culprit after the excitement was over.

It is therefore safe to say that he will have outgrown any taste for cock-fighting as a sport or pastime with the coming of maturer years.

But it will thus be seen that Master Jack Rathbone had never at any time been one of the goody-good order of youths. Yet his father in view of the part he had taken in fixing the tastes and inclinations of his one-time little boy, was scarcely justified in treating his well-nigh full grown son with the impatience and harshness he had several times of late exhibited towards him.

The truth was that the sepulchral ogre fostered and cherished within the fetid confines of the father's abnormal and unnaturally jealous inner consciousness, having tired of its one-time frequently recurring attacks upon the patient mother, had within the last two years settled upon her idolized son.

Thus it was that Jack's premonition of trouble for having allowed himself to be cajoled into remaining over at Belle

River for the Widow Martin's ball stood a very fair chance of realization.

On that evening Mr. Robert Rathbone returned from his counting house to his luxuriously comfortable home in an especially disordered frame of mind.

Things had not gone rightly with his business during the day.

The mercantile house of Rathbone & Ritter had, that morning, received intelligence of the fraudulent failure and flight to Canada of one of their wholesale department's heaviest country customers, entailing an inevitable loss to the firm of some three or four thousand dollars—a mere bagatelle, it is true, but aggravating withal because of certain exceptionally annoying circumstances attending the transaction involved.

The commercial traveller for the house, who had sold the last bill of goods to the fugitive delinquent, happened to be in the city, and the senior partner had sent for him, taken him into his private office, and, after locking the door, with a sternly determined mien proceeded to give him a going over in good set terms. This, however, the characteristically cheeky and independent, albeit blameless, drummer neither did not deserve nor would not take.

Reference to the letter book went to show that the order, which now could be debited to Profit and Loss, had been filled in pursuance of Mr. Rathbone's own personal instructions, and that his peripatetic agent had only acted under the firm's peremptory instructions, and much against his own individual judgment in having filled the order at all.

The drummer, at down-town lunch that day, had said to

another knight of the road: "I tell you, the old man was hot this morning about that Simpkins failure, and proposed coming down on me with both feet. But I wouldn't have it! It didn't take me long to prove to his mightiness that he, individually, alone was to blame in the matter, and that if I had been allowed to have my way in the premises, there wouldn't have been any loss at all, however small. Of course, the loss in the case doesn't amount to anything to a house like ours; but old Ratty was just wild when he found that he, and nobody else, was to blame. Admit it? Well I should smile! He had to; but he kicked like a Texan mule all the time, you bet!"

Mr. Rathbone had carried this Texan-mule humor back to his mansion in the evening, and didn't take it off with his hat and overcoat and his outside-world suavity and hang it up on the hat rack in his spacious entrance hall, to be donned again on his departure for down town in the morning.

He kept it right by, with and in him all the time, and mixed it up and blended it in with his aforementioned turkey-cock disposition as to his absent son and heir.

"Where is John?" he peremptorily demanded of Grace, his youngest, gum-chewing daughter, as after kissing him on his arrival, with askant countenance, she gazed up into his face searchingly, while he removed his hat and overcoat and hung them upon the hat rack in the hall to the left of the entrance.

Something in his demeanor and the tone of his voice denoted more than usual disaster to Jack, her beloved ally, whom she cared for with that sort of blindly enthusiastic

devotion known alone to short-dressed school girls of fifteen summers for their big brothers.

Immediately her incipient woman's instinct was put upon the alert, and all that she knew of policy, *finesse*, diplomacy or any other sort of art she had the slightest knowledge of, was at once made available in shielding her precious bipedal paragon.

Lie? Why, of course she'd lie for Jack's sake! What wouldn't she do for dear old Jack, who was always so good to her—so considerate of her in a patronizing, manly, undemonstrative sort of way?

If Jack's welfare or happiness seemed to require that she should make her way through an army of blue-coated guardians of the peace to the inevitable city hall tower, and there upon its apex stand upon her head, she would have undertaken to do so with the utmost *sang froid*.

A pretty little thing was this gum-chewing *petite* sylph with her bright, long lashed, dark blue eyes, and burnished brown hair.

Even that abomination in female attire known as a Mother Hubbard of some light blue material, trimmed with white, failed to disguise the gracefulness of her well-developed little figure, with its shapely little foot and ankle.

She was an immense favorite with the entire household and understood her father like a book. So practiced was she in the arts of *finesse* and diplomacy in her general bearing towards him and withal so affectionate, that she had frequently been called upon to intervene in behalf of some



delinquent member of the household that oil might be cast upon an existing domestic sea of troubles.

She knew exactly where Jack had gone. In fact, by feigning inability or unwillingness to walk to the convent for her music lesson that morning, she had enabled him, as per previously arranged programme, to take his pony and sleigh away from the premises without being questioned as to where he was going before he came back.

She liked Charley Ford. Yes, she liked Charley Ford—at first because he was a friend of Jack's; and anybody Jack liked she also must like, as a matter of course.

If Charley Ford had not been a friend of Jack's the probabilities were that she would never have known him at all, and then, of course, she never could have had any feelings towards him of any kind whatsoever—good, bad or indifferent.

Jack was always so good and so noble, and Charley Ford was so worthy a friend for him to have.

And, oh, how handsome he was this morning in his fur-trimmed, well-fitting coat and becoming cap as he stood upon the curb near to the convent gate waiting for she and Jack to drive up and find him there as previously arranged! How courteously and pleasantly he had handed her out of the sleigh, and, after a few words of delightful chat, how deferentially he had shaken her hand and said good-bye.

She was so glad that he and Jack had gone to the race at Belle River together, and she so hoped that they might have "a real good time."

She felt that their joint interests had been left under her

especial care during their absence, and they might depend upon her protection and defense of them to the utmost of her ability.

So that when her father asked "Where is John?" with a little tremor of nervousness at the sternness of the demand, she answered: "I don't know for a certainty where he went to, papa; but I believe when he went out he intended driving up to see how Mr. Hamilton is—poor old man! One of the day scholars at the convent, who lives up near where the Hamiltons do, told me that he was very low, indeed," and a benign look of seraphically sympathetic melancholy over-spread the innocent, young face.

Mr. Hamilton, an old Edinburgh University man, had occupied the position of private tutor to Jack and two other gentlemen's young sons until a fortnight previous, since which he had been confined to his house, two miles up the river road, with a severe attack of bronchitis, and had been obliged to forego his teaching.

This circumstance had furnished Grace, our mendacious young sylph, with what, it had suddenly flashed upon her, might prove a plausible and commendable means of accounting for her brother's absence from the house at the dinner hour.

"Stuff and nonsense," exclaimed Mr. Rathbone, scoffingly; "he is much more likely to be consorting with some of his congenially low, cock-fighting companions somewhere about the slums of the city."

"Oh, no, papa," remonstrated the romantic Grace, "I really do think he has gone up to the Hamiltons; and," she

hesitatingly added, "I think that Charley Ford has gone with him."

"That young Ford gone with him, ay? Boon companions, both! What one doesn't know about scampishness, the other will teach him—*arcades ambo!*"

"Oh, papa, you shouldn't say that Charley Ford is a scamp!" and having let this remonstrance escape her unwittingly, her face became very much flushed as she nervously clasped her father's coat sleeve above the elbow and accompanied him into the dining room. "Everybody," she tremulously added, as they passed the threshold, "says that he's a very good young man."

"Good young man, ay?" cried her father. "So was Jesse James a good young man!"

"Oh, papa, I think it's real mean of you to compare Jack's friends with thieves," and the color left her bright young face for the instant, as if she had been suddenly startled through fright.

As father and daughter entered the brightly lighted, cozy dining room, with its ready laid dinner table and crackling grate fire, Mrs. Rathbone emerged through the rear door from the kitchen, whither she had been to personally superintend preparations for the dishing of the dinner.

This meal of late years had gotten to be a matter of very large importance to the daily peace and harmony of the Rathbone household.

At the outset of their married life Mr. and Mrs. Rathbone had begun housekeeping in a modest little home situated conveniently to the store, and there each day's comparatively frugal dinner was partaken of with dispatch and *sans cere-*

monie at one o'clock sharp on working days, and perhaps an hour or so later on Sundays and holidays. They had lived but six or seven years in this simple, unostentatious way, when the firm of Rathbone & Ritter had sufficiently prospered to enable the senior member thereof to withdraw five thousand dollars from the concern and invest it in ten acres of one of the narrow French farms upon which Detroit is built.

This was thought to be an enormous price to pay for so small an area of land at the time, but this methodical Englishman, with that business foresight which so distinguished him, knew what he was about when he made the purchase, as the sequel proved.

He simply laid the foundation of an unusually liberal fortune by this one investment.

He saw that the old, original French settlers and their descendants, who owned a large proportion of the narrow farms upon which the beautiful city was to grow, with that conservative disposition to preserve everything as it is which so characterizes them as a race, were going to cling to their holdings for at least a generation to come, despite the specious blandishments of the speculative land agent.

This would have the inevitable effect of circumscribing the limits of available land for actual building or speculative purposes, and thus, by limiting the supply, increase the demand and, of course, the price, as a natural sequence.

This feature in the history of Detroit's building up is not alone peculiar to that city.

St. Louis, Missouri, notably, has undergone a very similar experience, arising from exactly similar causes.

Each of these large, metropolitan centres were founded and originally settled by the sturdy pioneers of *La Nouvelle France*, and it is probable that much of the solidity and permanent character of their present wealth and magnificence is not a little due to the go-ahead-slowly spirit engendered by the quaint conservatism of their old-time French *habitant* settlers.

However this may be, Mr. Rathbone's speculation turned out an immense success and, apart from any other of his resources, made him prospectively a rich man.

He divided the property into building lots, and reserved for his own occupation an entire square, surrounded on all sides by broad, well laid out streets.

In the centre of this, fronting upon what is now one of the chief wealthy residence streets of the city, he erected a spacious, square, brick house, with suitably commodious out-buildings, and proceeded to plant ornamental trees and lay out a lawn and garden, now become one of the sights of the city. The house itself, at the time of its erection, was thought to be a magnificent structure; but, by comparison with the imposing modern mansions now so common in this city of superbly commodious residences, as it nestles in the centre of its spacious grounds beneath the shadow of tall trees and its garnishment of well trained shrubbery, presents the appearance of a well preserved old English manor house as nearly as may be.

Its plan inside is unpretentious, and its decorations and furniture designed more for comfort and long service than for fleeting ornamental show.

As one enters the lofty main entrance hall from a pillared

vestibule at the front, if he be a social caller, he is ushered into the large drawing room to the left, running the full length of the building—furnished, upholstered and decorated after the luxuriant manner of households of American gentlemen of fortune. While visitors who call to see any member of the family, informally or upon business, on the other hand, are shown to the right, past the foot of the broad staircase leading to the upper story, into an ante-room of moderate dimensions, which is also largely used as a living room and general place of rendezvous for the family.

In this cozy little room before a cheerful, open, wood fireplace, with brass andirons and other glittering appointments, the family, when they are alone, after a late dinner, are wont to pass the long winter evenings. It also serves as a library, as evidenced by the tall black walnut bookcase enclosed with glass doors, which occupies the space from floor to ceiling between the two low, French windows at the front.

This contains a judicious selection of standard works upon popular topics—historical, scientific and political—and is fairly well stocked with works of fiction from Theodore Hook's "Jack Bragg" down to the latest conventional "study" of the latest "gushing maiden fair," or hankerer after ephemeral notoriety.

Here, too, upon an ornamental writing desk with folding top, in the far right-hand corner as you enter the room, the private letters of the family are indited. A graceful gas chandelier hangs suspended over the large, round centre table, refulgent in a bright scarlet broad-cloth cover.

The walls, wherever otherwise unoccupied, are covered

with well mounted, rare, old steel engravings of English rural scenes, and upon the broad, low, tiled mantel shelf and filagreed brackets suspended here and there about the walls are quaint and unique *objects de vertu* and bric-a-brac of various descriptions and qualities.

In the rear of this apartment is the dining room, furnished and upholstered *à l'Anglaise*, in black walnut and scarlet with a profusion of bright gilt-framed oil paintings—some of them works of no mean merit—covering the red papered walls in every direction.

From the large bay window looking to the west, and over the one at the south leading to the conservatory, bright red damask curtains hang suspended to the floor in graceful and ample folds.

The large oval dining table is laid ready for dinner and beneath the brilliant light of the overhanging chandelier with its variegated colored lamp shades presents a refinedly appetizing spectacle.

Mrs. Rathbone, her *petite* and still youthful figure enveloped in a black merino gown, with scarlet trimmings, a Dolly Varden cap upon her head and an Elizabethan ruff about her neck, enters the rear door, which leads through a passage way to the kitchen and servants' apartments just as Mr. Rathbone, with the mendacious little sprite, Grace, clinging to the sleeve of his right arm, enters from the front entrance hall.

"Ah, Robert," gently exclaimed Mrs. Rathbone greeting her husband with a cheery little smile as she fussily approached the open grate fire place, and proceeded to take

the poker in hand and give it a stirring up, "back home again, ay, dear?"

"Yes," he responded sententiously, as he pulled out his watch, "Is dinner ready?"

"It will be at half past six as usual," and then looking at the clock on the mantel piece, she added, "In just ten minutes from now it will be on the table."

"That old Jacobin clock," he asserted sharply, "is just ten minutes slow."

"Oh, Papa!" exclaimed Grace, now standing on the hearth rug beside him, "that can't be—let me look at your watch," but he snapped the case together and put it back into his pocket without allowing her to see it.

"It was right at one o'clock to-day," persisted Grace whose ardor was somewhat dampened since her father's comparison of Charley Ford with the redoubtable Jesse James. "I know it was, because when I came home from my music lesson to lunch to-day I compared it with the city hall time and it was exactly right."

"Well, it's not right now, then," he asserted positively. "I've no doubt it has been regulated to suit the delinquencies of that precious boy John, as everything else in this house is apparently."

"Has anything gone wrong in the business to-day Robert?" asked Mrs. Rathbone, with hardening countenance as she replaced the poker in its stand.

"No, nothing of any material consequence," he replied gruffly, "why do you ask?"

He knew that in view of the Simpkins failure, this was



not true, but he had ever made it a rule never to discuss his business matters at home.

This would have been trenching too much upon the supremacy of his domestic dictatorship, and his wife had therefore been kept as much in the dark as to the actual condition of his business affairs as the veriest stranger.

He had periodically talked with her and given her a showing of the investments he had made of the comparatively small patrimony she had inherited from her father, but with reference to his own business proper he was ever silent.

Hence it was, that to her well-nigh unprecedented request to know whether anything had gone wrong in the business he had made the mendacious reply he had, and asked why she wanted to know.

"I only thought," she said, in a voice with something of a nervous tremor in it, "that you seem to have come home in a very bad humor."

"I won't at all admit that I have come home in a bad humor," he oracularly insisted, "and even if I had it wouldn't have originated in my office. I think by this time you ought to know that I never allow the state of my business to influence my conduct at home. I must say, however, that the state of my domestic surroundings are day by day becoming more disagreeably unpleasant!"

And then having seated himself in an arm chair, facing the fire-place, with his back to the chandelier, he proceeded to open up the evening paper with a sort of "You-daren't-knock-the-chip-off-my-shoulder" air.

To this, the now much disturbed little wife, pursuing her

usual policy of silence until the clouds rolled by, would have responded nothing but for the interposition of Grace.

That sylph-like and somewhat ruffled young person, seating herself on her father's knee, with a pout and in injured tones coquettishly observed: "It's too bad that you don't like any of us any more!"

"What stuff and nonsense!" he exclaimed, as he threw down the paper at the side of his chair and arose to his feet again. "My feelings towards you and your mother and Emily are as they ever have been, and I hope always will be; but I'm free to admit that I am becoming tired of being made a convenience of and of having this house made a boarding and lodging quarters for the more especial accommodation of an idle, worthless young cub!" and, after glaring for an instant at the now agitated little wife, he proceeded to pace back and forth across the room with scowling countenance.

The cat was out!

Mr. Rathbone had succeeded in working himself into a rage at his truant *bete noir* son, and in doing so had made the patient mother rather more uncontrollably out of temper for the moment than she had ever allowed herself to be before throughout their whole married life. She had succeeded heretofore, by the practice of a studied system of forbearance and self-denial, in at least curbing the truculence of her exacting husband's jealous temper. Perhaps, if she had been somewhat more self-assertive and combative in her treatment of him when he had been seized with these periodical tantrums, she might have contrived to tide them over with less of humiliating jibes and jest to

bear. For Mr. Rathbone was essentially one of those genus lords of creation whose blustering bark, being more bitter than their bite, would have, in all likelihood, been managed better by a little determined opposition and retaliation.

But the chastening and subduing influence her girlhood disappointment as to Gustavus Ford had had upon her interest in her early married life, coupled with the inner consciousness that she was every day living in the guilt of having withheld from her husband that which he should have known before he had made her his wife, had enabled her to practice all her inherent amiability and evenness of temper with fairly successful results — not, however, without much to bear of misery and humiliation. For herself, in looking back upon these bitter trials, she did not so much care. But this comparatively new feature in her crown of sorrows—this perpetual scolding about her darling boy, Jack, for no sufficient cause, was more than she could bear. And to call him a worthless young cub! This was outrageous, and nothing had occurred between them for a long time that had made her feel more pugnaciously retaliatory than this.

She understood her husband thoroughly.

She knew his every indiosyncrasy. She knew that as a sort of freak in human motives he was insanely jealous of the love and consideration shown by herself and the girls for Jack; and she had long ago cautioned both Emily and Grace not to be unnecessarily demonstrative of their affection for their brother in the presence of their father.

For herself, she had often dissembled or disguised her intense love and devotion for her son that his father's temper might not be ruffled.

Oftentimes she had apparently seemed coldly indifferent when Jack's interests were involved, while in fact she had felt the most absorbing anxiety about them.

When he had finished at the local public school and it became necessary to consider the best means of topping off the elementary teachings obtained there with the higher instruction furnished by a finishing school or college, she had fondly wished that he might be sent to one of her own denominational institutions either in the States or Canada.

But in view of their marriage compact with reference to the rearing of the children she had hesitated about giving utterance to the wish.

She had been allowed free scope in the religious and secular bringing up of their daughters, and under these circumstances it was only just that her husband should be equally untrammelled in the education of their son.

With insular superciliousness, sometimes the outcome of ignorant prejudice, and sometimes the offspring of an ineradicable *penchant* for "every *think* English you know." Mr. Rathbone regarded the great institutions of learning on this continent *en masse* as Brummagum establishments of the most pronounced kind.

He would have liked to have sent his son home to England to finish his education at one of the ancient schools or colleges of his fatherland, but to this suggestion his wife had raised the objection that it would be sending him too far way from home, and that it would make her very unhappy to have the broad Atlantic 'twixt her and her idolized boy.

Recognizing the naturalness of this feeling on the part of

his patient wife, and having become measurably indifferent about what concerned his half-fledged son, Mr. Rathbone had proposed that the services of a private tutor might be secured and the boy's education completed at home.

This had been done accordingly, to the profound satisfaction of the mother—the foundation thereby being laid for much paternal snarling and growling.

Nothing, however, up to this time had occurred which wifely diplomacy and maternal devotion had been unable to cope with. Certainly nothing so portentous of disaster to Jack as this outbreak had ever manifested itself before. The idea of calling her poor, dear, unjustly abused boy "an idle, worthless young cub," and that in the presence of his little sister, too! This was more than she would silently put up with! She must say something in remonstrance; but, oh, how tremblingly agitated she was with indignation! She became as pale as the white ruff about her neck and she shook like a leaf as, straightening herself up, with flashing eyes, she said: "Robert, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for feeling the wickedness you do towards your own son, whom everybody gets on well with except his own, unnatural father!"

"I suppose by everybody," cried the head of the house, still emulating the perambulating, caged tiger, "you mean every stable boy and cock-fighter in the neighborhood!"

"I do not!" vehemently rejoined the little mother, her pent-up temper now fully aflame; "I mean his own equals, everywhere! And as for his present fancy for fowls and horses, he will grow out of that—and he never would have had it at all to the extent he has if it had not been for your

example and encouragement of it when he was a little fellow ! ”

This was a long speech for the tremulously amiable, little woman in her present unusually excited condition, and from sheer exhaustion she leaned her head upon her right arm as it rested upon the low chimney mantel and panted for breath.

“That’s right ! ” he replied, bitterly, as he wheeled about in his pacing of the floor, “blame me ; I get the blame for everything ! Perhaps I am responsible for his whereabouts, God knows where, at the present moment ! Probably in the harness room of some public stable in the city, or maybe in some cock-pit in the purlieus of the town ! Perhaps I am to blame,” he continued, with rising intonation, as he pursued his vibatory walk, “for his constantly repeated absence from his meals with the rest of us, and his prowling into the house at all hours of the night and day that happens to suit his convenience ! ”

“Oh, papa ! ” poutingly remonstrated Grace, seated upon an arm of her father’s recently vacated chair, “Jack doesn’t prowl ! ”

“Silence, miss ! ” he thundered, as with a stamp of his foot he came to a stand, and flashed down upon his youngest born with glittering glare and reddening countenance.

This outbreak so startled the unfortunate sylphide that she involuntarily jumped to her feet, and gazing aghast for an instant into the gleaming eyes of her ferocious parent, she burst into tears and rushed out of the room.

There was now a pause of fiercely palpitating silence,

which, after an instant or so, was broken by the little mother.

"Robert Rathbone!" she said, as she straightened herself up from the mantel piece, "you can be the most unconscionable bully in the world when you like! It would seem as if you could not help being so; but surely God will some day punish you for the unnatural feelings you have towards your own son!"

It is safe to say that this was an unprecedentedly bitter speech as emanating from this subdued and patient little woman; but

"The smallest worm will turn, being trodden on,"

and her lord and master was brought to a stand and rendered dumb for the instant by the novelty of it. He glared at her aghast, at a loss what to say, while the old-fashioned hall clock painfully resounded forth four or five slowly, deliberate ticks of its long pendulum.

Then his momentarily suspended rage fumed forth again with redoubled vigor, and the family skeleton emerged from its closet in self-assertive sway as, resuming his pacing of the floor, with a demoniacal chuckle, he said: "*My* son, ay? Ha, ha, umph! *My* son? I have very grave doubts about his being *my* son!"

If this venomous insinuation, before it was uttered, had been materialized into a billet of wood and thrown at her full in the face, it could not have subjected her nervous system to a greater shock, or been more paralyzing in its effects.

She recoiled, and her face blanched as with the startled

horror she might have felt had she suddenly come upon a threatening snake.

She gave two or three long, gasping gulps for breath and looked for an instant as if she might sink limp and prone upon the hearth rug.

Then, with great apparent effort, she straightened her *petite* figure up to its full height and, throwing back her head, put her left hand to her forehead as she steadied herself with her right upon the mantel piece, while she muttered a prayer for patience.

Then, with solemn dignity, she followed her husband with her eyes as he pursued his vibratory walk, and in subdued and deliberate tones said: "Robert, if you had said that five minutes before, while Gracie was in the room, I should have left this house, never to return to it!"

And, without further parley, she slowly, and with faltering steps, as one weakened from illness, glided out into the entrance hall and thence up the broad stair case to the floor above, leaving her lord and master and the family skeleton in full and undisputed possession of the regions below.

But this undisputed possession profited the skeleton nothing, as the lord and master became conscious of a rising suspicion that he had made a brute of himself.

Was marriage a failure? Yes! most emphatically, yes. Marriage *was* a failure.

He wished to God he had never been married. Howbeit since he was married he would not shirk its responsibilities. One of these was the enforcement of a proper observance of discipline in his own domestic household, and this he was bound to do from this time forward.



He ceased his pacing of the heavily Turkey-carpeted floor and threw himself down into his own especial arm chair, and gazing absorbedly upon the glowing grate fire, ruminated upon the situation.

Under the baleful influence of the family skeleton, for the first time in all his married life, he had openly referred in so many words to the disturbing phantom of jealous suspicion, which, for its first few years, had periodically blackened his innermost thoughts and gnawed at his jaundiced heart.

He had harked back to a tentative night-mare period of existence, which his wife's long-suffering patience and attention to his every wish and want had, to some extent, lived down years ago.

And who had driven him to this? John! That incorrigible boy, John, whom his wife and daughters, dissemble as they might, regarded with greater consideration than they did himself.

How could he decently, without laying the foundation for a scandal among the friends of the family, get rid of this incubus upon his happiness in his own household?

He would see if something could not be done in the premises to-morrow.

Meanwhile his better nature and his sense of justice were beginning to assert themselves. There was no manner of doubt but that he had been unwarrantably brutal to his wife and little Gracie.

The trim waiting-maid here appeared at the rear door with the first installment of the dinner.

He would run up to his dressing room and wash his hands and brush his hair as was his wont before sitting down.

As he came to the head of the stairs on his return to the dining room, he paused for an instant, and facing the lighted transom over the door of his wife's and his own joint bedroom, he called out in as conciliatory and apologetic a voice as he could command, "Come Emily, dinner is on! Come Gracie!"

But there came no audible response.

A painful and ominous silence pervaded the upper floor of the Rathbone mansion for the nonce.

Down stairs in the dining room, while the inviting repast smoked upon the snowy damask-covered table, with its costly dinner service, and well appointed plate and glass ware, the hushed stillness of everything was still more apparent, and the crackling, grate fire brought out in bold and disagreeable relief the discordant condition of the domestic atmosphere.

He would not sit down to dinner alone. He would wait for his wife and daughter. Surely they could not ignore his pacific announcement of its being on the table.

Meanwhile, with noiseless slackened footfall, he resumed his ante-bellum pacing of the floor until the opening and closing of a door upstairs, followed by light and hesitating descending footsteps upon the stair case, betokened the coming of his wife or youngest daughter.

He had time to take two or three leisurely turns up and down before he at last veered about at the far end of the room and beheld Grace nervously absorbed in plucking at a

thread of yarn she held between the first finger and thumb of her left hand, standing in the doorway leading to the entrance hall.

The unfortunate sylphide was very much swollen of eyelids and flushed of face—her cheeks shining in the gas-light with refulgent polish.

"Is your mother not coming down to dinner, Gracie?" he asked as he slowly approached her.

"No, papa," she replied, with an involuntary volley of childlike inward sobs, "she says she has a headache and hopes you will excuse her if she doesn't come down."

"Ah, she's not coming to dinner, ay?" he repeated as going up to his youngest born, he took her hand in his and patting her upon the bowed head, he stooped over and kissed her swollen, glistening cheek, whereat the sylphide's pent-up, injured feelings again burst forth into a flood of gushing tears.

"There, there now," he said in deprecating voice, as he put his arm around her little figure and endeavored to pacify her, "don't cry, my dear! Don't cry, there's a good child. Let bygones be bygones and forgive your old father who is sorry for being harsh with his poor little girl," and he kissed her again.

This was enough for the forgiving, albeit coquettish, pet of the house.

She looked up smilingly through her sobbing tears, and gushingly throwing her arms around her father's neck, she gave him a resounding smack upon the cheek with her burning, quivering lips.

"Come now, dear, there's a good little girl," he said,

gently disengaging himself from her twining arms and straightening himself up "Come, since your mother is not coming down, you and I must make the best of the dinner all by ourselves.

"Now, dear, you take your mamma's place at the head of the table and be mistress, and I'll take mine at the other end and be your abject slave for the rest of the evening."

But out of this arrangement there came but little joy or satisfaction.

To her father's spasmodic efforts to cheer her up and smooth matters as if nothing had happened, the poor sylph was far too nervously anxious because of the portentous turn affairs had taken in respect of Jack.

She would do anything in the world in her power to help her brother out of the trouble she felt was inevitably in store for him on his return from Belle River. She of course was not afraid that Jack would be flogged. She knew that the days of that kind of punishment in the household had gone by; and she derived one further bit of consolation by bringing to mind some of the numerous previous occasions on which her mamma, in her quiet way, had contrived to rescue dear old Jack from threateningly direful consequences.

There was one thing, however, she could not rid her thoughts of, and that was that it was very wicked and uncharitable of her father to compare Charley Ford with that horrible outlaw, Jesse James.

She knew that the ferry boats across from the Canadian side of the river ran until a late hour, and up to this time it

had never occurred to her but that Jack would return some time during that evening.

If she had known the true state of the case, and that at that very moment both Charley Ford and Jack respectively, with a pretty French girl hanging upon their respective right arms, were hilariously witnessing the struggle for supremacy in the two-handed reel twixt the sportive Madam Martin and Peter Bertrand at the widow's ball, her nervously troubled condition might not have been quite so poignant as it actually was.

Perhaps her anxiety about the outcome of it all in respect of Jack might not have abated much; but she certainly wouldn't have thought her father so bad a man after all for having compared Charley Ford to Jesse James.

As it was, the dainty little Miss Gracie Rathbone contrived to bear herself with a semblance of cheerfulness, until Mr. Rathbone, rising from his seat and taking up his evening paper, invited her to accompany him into the library and sit with him there for a time as was her and her mother's wont when they were alone, and peace and harmony prevailed throughout the presently distracted household.

Mr. Rathbone was not a smoker.

He had been far too dapper and circumspect (some might say too sensible) in his youth and early manhood to contract the habit, and now, of course, he was too old to acquire a knowledge of the consolation to be gotten out of a judicious use of tobacco.

Had he smoked, it would doubtless have exercised a benignant and otherwise improving effect upon his temper and home conduct.

Are not all uncertain-tempered and irritable men improved by a moderate use of a good sample of the aromatic weed?

Do not the puffs pulled forth from a pipe of good tobacco or from a fragrant cigar act upon the superabundant bile of one of these, as do the puff exhausts from a surcharged engine boiler?

However that may be Mr. Rathbone did not object to the smell of smoke.

In fact, he really liked the aroma of a good Havana cigar and always kept a supply on hand for visiting friends.

After having occupied himself with his paper for half an hour after he had seated himself before the crackling wood fire in the so-called library, he turned to the demurely silent Gracie, as she mechanically turned over the leaves of a pictorial magazine at the other side of the centre table and said, "I wish my dear, that you'd go out and tell the housemaid to fetch the little brass kettle filled with hot water in here and set it beside the fire place. I think I should like a glass of grog presently, and Mr. Chase may come in for a game of cribbage and he'd want one too."

"Yes, papa," responded the sylphide slowly and languidly rising from her chair and, going over to him, held up her cheek to be kissed, "and I think I'll say good-night before I go papa. I'm not feeling quite right and I think I'll go to bed."

A diplomatic young person was this youngest daughter of Mr. Robert Rathbone.

She purposely avoided all reference to her mother's non-appearance lest it might lead to the subject of Jack's con-

tinued absence from the parental roof and thereby revive the smouldering embers of paternal wrath.

"Very well, my dear," replied her father, "you had perhaps better go up and see how your mother is getting on, too."

Manifestly the tyrant of the Rathbone household was relenting of his ante-prandial treatment of his patient wife and affectionate little daughter.

Not so, however, with regard to his complete loss of patience with that growing red rag of his existence, his only son and heir.

Annette, the pretty French Canadian housemaid, having brought in the hot water, he himself went to the sideboard, and securing the other ingredients made himself a hot Scotch toddy. Over this and a succeeding, rather stronger one, in undisturbed solitude he thought out the problems: "What is to be done with that boy? How is his presence in the house decently to be gotten rid of?"

No matter what it cost, ere another week passed something definite must be decided upon in answer to these embarrassing queries.

His friend and neighbor, Mr. Chase, did not come in for the game of cribbage and cigar after all, and he tried to concentrate his thoughts upon a long article in one of the daily papers (an extract from a labor journal) upon the iniquity of commercial trusts; but he soon tired of this and gradually nodded off into a sound sleep in peaceful oblivion of domestic broils and embarrassing sons.

Waking up in due course he found the fire nearly gone out and the hands of the clock on the mantel piece showing

the evening far enough spent to warrant his going to bed, which he was very glad of.

He wondered whether that boy John had come in yet or not?

He would look into the servants' sitting room and ask Annette.

Pulling himself together he accordingly went. "Has Master John come in yet?" he asked, as he opened the door, to find Annette and another of the female servants busy sewing at a brightly lighted table.

"No, monsieur, he have not arrive home yet," responded the girl politely, in her pretty, French accent.

"Then, before you go to bed, Annette," he replied, "if he still should not have come in, please see that all the doors and windows are properly fastened, as usual. The house shall not be left open all night to suit anybody's convenience!"

"No, monsieur, dat ees parfaetly correc," assented Annette, with a serious bow of her head.

"If Master John should come and want to get in any time after we have all gone to bed, I shall get up myself and let him in."

"Verrah well, sair," replied the urbane Annette, demurely nodding her head—never intending to comply with the enjoiner, however.

She was far too loyal to her mistress and liked Jack too well to think of doing so.

The master of the house now ascended to the joint parental bed room, deserted of its mistress (who was quartered for the night with Gracie, across the hall) and, after dismally



undressing, rolled himself in the luxurious coverings of the capacious bed, and courted nature's sweet restorer in single dissatisfaction.

His last thoughts before he fell asleep were a sort of gloating over the probability of his being called up sometime during the night—the later the better—to let his offending son in.

This would furnish tangible fuel for his wrath, and further justify the peremptory course he had partially made up his mind to adopt within the next week or so.

When at last he did drop off to sleep he dreamed that Jack had grown suddenly to middle-aged manhood, and as the son of Gustavus Ford was about to marry his mother and take her off on a European trip, leaving him alone with Gracie, who went about with her face all smeared with blood.

Thus in grimly fantastic and indefinable shadows did the head of the house of Rathbone & Ritter, slumberously live the troubles of the evening over again.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *A Sylph-like Albeit Artful Nurse.*

WHEN MR. RATHBONE had called out in conciliating tones to his wife over the open transom of her bedroom that dinner was ready and then had gone down stairs to the dining room, the latter had gone across the hall to Gracie's luxuriant little sleeping apartment, where she found that incipient young woman prone upon her bed struggling with a series of gradually subsiding sobs of injured feelings.

Gently going over to her, the little mother sat down on the edge of the bed and endeavored to pacify her youngest born. "There now Gracie dear," she said soothingly, "don't cry any more, there's a good girl! Your father didn't mean so to offend you. I'm sure he didn't dear!"

"Yes he did too!" insisted the pet of the house with her handkerchief over her eyes.

"Oh no, I know he didn't, dear."

"Yes, he did," persisted the sylph, with a long-drawn shuddering sob, "I never saw him look so mad before."

"But he wasn't mad with you, dear. He was as usual annoyed with your brother Jack, and now unfortunately that means me, too" she added with a deep-drawn sigh.

"I think he's a very unreasonable and a very wicked man!"

"Well, he's sorry for it now, dear. Didn't you hear

him calling us to dinner before he went down stairs a moment ago?"

"Yes, I heard him," sobbed Grace, "but I'm not going!"

"Not for my sake, dear?" and bending over, she kissed the pet of the house. "I'm sure you'll go down for my sake, won't you, dear? One of us ought to go down, and your poor mother is really ill—yes, dear, really ill, with such a sick headache," and the little woman laid her blanched cheek down upon the pillow along-side her daughter's reclining head.

Rousing herself up to a sitting posture and gazing at her pain-stricken face for an instant, Gracie gently stroked the little mother's throbbing forehead and kissed her cheek in gushing sympathy.

"I do hope you're not going to have one of those dreadful sick headaches of your's. Can't I do anything to relieve you, mamma dear?"

"You can saturate a handkerchief with that alcohol mixture and put it on my forehead, if you will, dear," languidly suggested the mother.

"Yes, of course I will, mamma," and she sprang from off the bed, utterly forgetful of her own injured feelings. "Where is the alcohol bottle mamma?"

"I think it's in the bathroom." And straightway the bottle was brought, the handkerchief saturated, and the old fashioned woman's remedy for sick headache placed in position. "Now dear, I'll be all right in a short time," said the mater in a subdued voice, as Gracie covered her with a thickly wadded bed spread. "I hope her mother's own little

girl will go down and join her father at dinner, won't you dear? kiss me, there's a good girl!"

"Of course I'll go down, mamma dear, since you're so anxious that I should; but I'm not a bit hungry, and I'd rather be whipped than go," she said, as she kissed the little woman.

"I know, dear; I dare say you dislike going down very much, but you'll feel all the better for having done your duty."

And thus, after washing her face and hands, the pet of the household was instigated, with faltering, hesitating step, to take her way down the broad staircase to join her father at dinner, as recorded in the last chapter.

Albeit this dainty little youngest daughter of Robert and Emily Rathbone had yet to see her fifteenth birthday, she had even now become a typical child-woman of the period, and like an affectionate, generous-hearted woman, capable of the most self-sacrificing acts in the interest of any one she really loved.

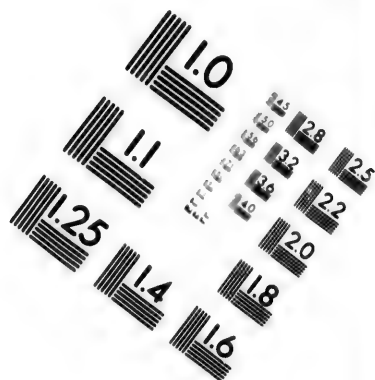
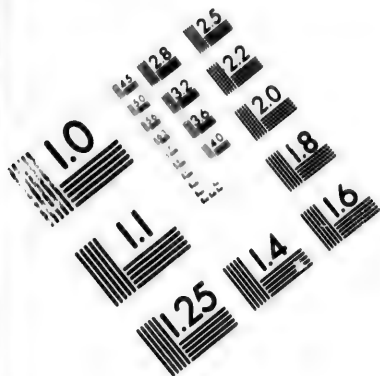
When, after the trying ordeal of that distasteful dinner, she bade her father good night in the library, she returned to her own room to find her mother lying upon the bed where she had left her.

"Are you awake, mamma dear?" she enquired, gently going to the bedside on tip-toe.

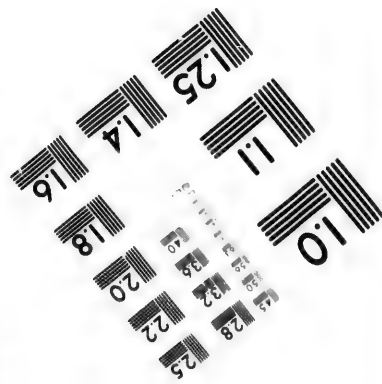
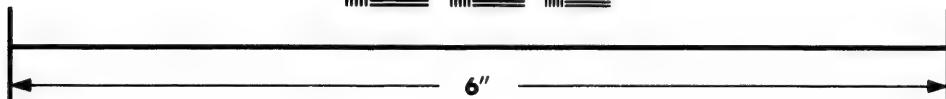
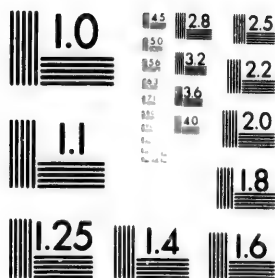
"Yes, dear," whispered the little woman, sleepily.

"It's all over!" with a sigh; "I have said good-night to papa."

"What's all over, my dear?" demanded the mother, starting up out of a half doze.



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"Why, the dinner, of course," smilingly responded Gracie.

"Has Jack come in yet, dear?"

"No, mamma, he hasn't come back yet."

"Oh, my God! what is to become of us?" sighed the little mother.

"Why, you mustn't talk like that, mamma! Jack's all right."

"How do you know that he is all right, dear?"

"Because I know where he is—at least I know where he started to go to."

"And where did he start to?" asked the little woman, anxiously gazing into the eyes of her daughter.

"Why, he and Charley Ford went to a race at Belle river."

"Well, my dear, why couldn't you have told me that before? And I shouldn't have worried to the extent I have about him."

"Well, mamma, I thought that they'd surely be back by this time. And although they did not tell me not to tell anybody where they had gone, I thought it best to keep it a secret, because they might think it mean of me to tell anybody without their authority, you know."

"They are both very bad boys to have stolen away in the manner they did!" vehemently asserted the mater, rousing up from her recumbent posture on the bed. "And I'll give Charley Ford a piece of my mind, about his leading Jack off to horse races, the first time I see him!"

"Oh, but mamma!" remonstrated the sylph. "I don't think Charley Ford led Jack to the race. In fact, I know that if Jack hadn't told him about it Charley never would

have known that there was to be a race at Belle River to-day."

"Well, but Charley Ford is older than Jack, and he ought to know better," sharply observed the mother.

"He is only fifteen months older than Jack, mamma," weakly observed the sylph as she proceeded to take the ribbon out of her long plait of braided brown hair.

It was quite evident that Mrs. Rathbone had made up her mind to share her little daughter's bed for the night. While Gracie was gone down to dinner the little woman had aroused herself sufficiently to go across the hall to her own apartment, procure her night gown, and robe herself for the night; so that shortly after the sylphide's return to her room after dinner, mother and daughter found themselves at least physically comfortably bestowed along-side each other in Gracie's luxurious bed for the night.

It was not absolutely *une nuit blanche* for either mother or daughter. Now that the former was assured of the whereabouts of her son she had found some consolation in knowing that he had not fallen a victim to the many snares and pitfalls extant within the city limits. It was her exaggerated idea of the blanishments of these that to a large extent reconciled her to Jack's frequent expeditions over into the French settlements across the river.

Of that nationality herself, she knew that as compared with the methods of others, the amusements of her own primitive *habitant* people were measurably free from guile.

It was therefore in some sense with a feeling of relief that she received Gracie's assurance that Jack had gone over into Canada—notwithstanding that his object in going



thither was to witness a horse race on the ice. Yet in view of her husband's outrageous exhibition of temper because of Jack's absence from the house at that hour without leave, she looked forward with dread to the scene which would surely attend his return either that night or on the morrow, and it was well on towards morning ere her nervously anxious consciousness drifted away into peaceful reinvigorating sleep.

Meanwhile the young person who laid along-side her mother, after frequent attempts to engage her troubled parent in desultory conversation of a designedly cheering kind with indifferent success, lapsed off into a contemplation of her own innermost mental promptings.

She had great confidence in her patient little mother's ability to manipulate Jack out of any serious consequences of his escapade, and she therefore fell to elaborating a little scheme especially designed for her own individual delectation.

It must somewhat regretfully be admitted that this little scheme upon her awakening on this Sabbath morn was not without its impelling influence upon her religious designs for the day.

"Mamma," she said on getting up and peeping through the side of the window blind at the weather outside, "do you think you feel well enough to go to church this morning?"

"Not just now, dear," faintly replied the mater, not yet out of bed; "but perhaps after I have had a cup of tea I may feel better."

"Would you like one now, mamma?" said the eager enquiry.

"Yes, I think I should, dear. Call out from the head of the back stairway to Annette and ask her to make me a strong cup of tea. I feel as though I wanted something to strengthen me before I attempt to get up."

"Call out to Annette!" exclaimed the pet of the house, with assumed disgust; "I'd be a pretty one to call out to Annette to fetch you up a cup of tea when you're not feeling well, wouldn't I, now? I, myself, who can make tea with any man, woman or expert cook in the city or surrounding country! Why, mamma," she went on, as she hurried on her stockings and slippers, "what do you think is going to become of your precious, youngest, female daughter when she grows old and toothless and stiff in the 'jints', as Michael calls them, if, when she's young and with suppleness endowed, she'd let any other person in the crowd (which it is poetry) get the dearest little mother in the world a cup of tea when that dearest little mother is not feeling as well and happy as she deserves to feel every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year of every decade of her dear, precious, sweet, useful, invaluable life? Why, what am I here for, I'd like to know? Am I ever to confine myself to the purely ornamental in this transitory sphere? Am I ——"

"Oh, Gracie, Gracie, you silly child!" interrupted the mother, laughing, "do stop that nonsense!"

"Yes, mamma dear, of a truth I think there's quite sufficient nonsense in my having forgotten where I put that

wrapper when I took it off yesterday morning. Ah, here it is! Here is the variegated garment of ample fold! Thus arrayed in matutinal attire," she continued with serious face, elaborate bow and much affected importance, as she left the room, "I shall proceed to the culinary department of this mansion in quest of that aromatic herb known to commerce, society and the gastronomic world as *tea*!"

Not a word had been said of Jack. In view of last night's experience that young gentleman's continued absence had become a subject too awful for discussion with the anxious little mother. As for Grace, she had felt quite certain before she went to sleep last night that her brother would, in all likelihood, not return until ten or eleven o'clock in the morning.

She thought it quite likely that he would have been detained by the race until near dark, and an eighteen-mile drive on a dark night over indifferent sleighing was a serious undertaking. She, therefore, hoped that Jack and his companion had remained over at Belle River for the night, and the wish became father to the thought.

If she were correct in coming to this conclusion, then they would be likely to come over from the Canadian side on the ten o'clock ferry.

"Mamma dear," she said, demonstratively sniffing at the fumes arising from the hot tea, as she handed the cup to her mother, "if this should make you feel very, very much better, and I am sure it will, for the aroma arising from it is of itself e-normously revivifying—excuse my large language, please—don't you think that in that case you might be

induced to do what Mrs. Dombey didn't—make an effort to get up shortly and take me to early mass?"

"Why do you want to go to early mass my dear?"

"Well one reason is that it's such a lovely morning."

"But you know there's no sermon preached at the early service," remonstrated the mother.

"Troth thin, ma'm," replied the sylph in Irish dialect, "if we're to have foire and brimstone flung at us in bowld Irish brogue to the extint we had by that riverend Irish gentileman last Sunday, I think we're well out of it, ma'm, an so I do, ma'm! Sure, ma'm, is the tay all right and to your loiking, ma'm?"

"Yes dear, it's just right," replied the little woman, laughing.

"As good as Annette could have made it?"

"Yes indeed, as good as anyone could have made it."

"There's the dearest and most grateful little mother in the world for saying so," and the gushing pet put her arms around her mother's neck and kissed her voluminously.

Straightening herself up she resumed, "And you're sure it's quite satisfactory to your palate and quite strong enough, is it mamma?"

"Yes, quite satisfactory in every way."

"Then," said the sylph dramatically, addressing the ceiling with clasped hands, "blessed be the Grand Mogul, the Grand Mandarin or other supremely elevated Chinese potentate who first discovered *tea*! Yes, tea! that beverage which cheers but not inebriates—alike indispensable to the palaces of the rich and consoling to the cabins of the poor! Bless thee! bless thee, oh tea! Thou art about to restore

to the arms of a doting and somewhat demented daughter, the fondest, the fairest, the most amiable, the most indulgent, the most affectionate—

"Oh, Gracie, my child," laughed the mother, "do stop that nonsense. What on earth has come over you this morning? I'm sure things are not so very bright with us just now."

"Hem—ha—what did you say, darling mamma? Tell Michael to have the horses and sleigh ready to take us to church in half an hour—is that what you said, darling mamma?" and putting her hand to her ear, in imitation of an old female *beneficiare* of the family, she continued, "Excuse me, misses, I'se a leetle hard o'heerin; but if that's what you ses, ma'm, I'll be right peert about givin' the order."

"Well, then," said the little woman, laughingly, "you can go and tell Michael to get the horses and sleigh ready in half an hour," and as the diplomatic pet forthwith took her departure to give Michael, the coachman, the desired instructions, Mrs. Rathbone got out of bed.

Why Gracie was so bent upon going to early mass was because she knew that there she would meet her friend and *quasi-confidante*, Emily Ritter, whom she particularly wanted to see.

Why she wanted to see and confer with Miss Emily Ritter will be made apparent in a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

### *An Idealistic Stray Sheep.*

IT was close upon nine o'clock with the bright unclouded sun's rays pouring in through the open topmost halves of the two Venetian blinds, which shielded the windows of the family bedroom looking eastward, ere Mr. Rathbone aroused himself to a thoroughly awakened condition on the morning after the events last recorded of him.

It had become his habit of late years to lie abed at least two hours later on Sunday morning than was his wonted hour for rising on week days.

He had fallen into the lazy habit of looking over the Sunday morning's voluminous local papers, now become so conspicuous a feature in Detroit's journalistic enterprise, before he got up to leisurely dress and breakfast.

His wife usually brought him the papers and a cup of coffee and a bit of buttered toast before he got out of bed on the morning of the first day of the week.

But she had not done so this morning.

He supposed that she was too grievously annoyed with him for what he had said to her last night to do so. Well, he would try and make amends to her for what he had said—but he was determined upon one thing, he would not tolerate that boy John's presence in the house one day longer than he could decently help. John it was who had caused all the unpleasantness in the household since Emily's

marriage more than a year ago, and John, therefore, must be got rid of.

However, it was time to get up now.

The bells of certain of the churches throughout the city were clanging forth the first installments of their invitations to their followers—to the unregenerate sinner alike, with their pious front pew pillars—to the wolves and the lambs—the goats and the sheep of their respective folds—all were being called to worship at the sacred shrine of Him who died for sinners.

Of late years the head of the prosperous firm of Rathbone & Ritter had greatly fallen away from the tenets and active observance of the faith of his fathers for so many generations past, and now his luxuriously upholstered front pew in St. Pancras' knew him but seldom.

In his early struggles to commercial success in the city—when he was laying the foundation of his present generous fortune—he had found great satisfaction, not to say encouragement, in a regular attendance at his church and an active participation in all moves looking to the advancement and good of his community.

When Jack was a little boy in small clothes he had felt a paternal pride and an unspeakable sense of well doing when, leading his handsome, dapper little son by the hand, he walked up the main aisle of his church, and in the sight of his fellow-worshippers, took his seat in his pew each Sunday morning with unflinching regularity.

But during these latter prosperous years he had become impregnated with idealism and, like the sage of Chelsea, had imbibed a predisposition to scoff and inwardly sneer at

all conventional signs and visible outward exhibitions of a purely, presumedly, inward spiritual grace. He now looked upon the large majority of ostentatious religious observances as a means—and a most efficacious means—to a materialistic end, to-wit, the accumulation of wealth and the consequent respect of one's fellow citizens.

Any set of religious tenets, faith or theory, not absolutely repugnant to one's reasoning faculties (albeit the same might be founded upon superstition pure and simple), might be advantageously utilized in the interest of one's material advancement during this pending, fleeting show. But when this was the case the higher transcendental aims of a divine faith must be set aside or be made subordinate thereto.

He had always felt a vague sense of the existence of two separate and distinct departments in the orthodox faith in which he had been reared, which held the same relative attitudes as to each other that the human soul holds to the human body. The one was the ideal or sentimental head, while the other was the materialistic outward sign of a not necessarily existent inward spiritual grace. To serve one without slighting the other, or to serve each equally well at one and the same time was as much out of the question as is the proverbial impossibility of serving two masters.

These kinds of reasonings and contemplations had brought about in Mr. Rathbone, if not a total recantation, at least a sad falling off from his early religious precepts.

Of late years this change had become so marked that for



months at a stretch his pew in St. Pancras' virtually knew him not.

At first his wife, notwithstanding the difference of her faith, was wont to remonstrate with him because of this falling off and especially because of the bad example it afforded their son John.

This, for a time at the outset of his decline, had frequently instigated him to attend divine service when he would have far rather remained at home and read his Sunday papers.

Later on it grew less potent in its influence, and now that the turkey-gobbler spirit had taken such apparently complete possession of him as to his son and heir, he had for a long time ignored church attendance altogether.

Jack was old enough and ought to know enough to go to church without an escort, and he was always made to go if he ever manifested any disposition to remain away, which, however, had been very rarely the case.

This morning, however, Mr. Rathbone bethought him that he would attend divine service himself.

It might have the effect of showing his wife and Gracie, without his being obliged to tell them in so many words that he was as penitent as he could be about anything which involved his position as supreme head of the household, for the violence he had exhibited towards them last evening.

And besides it would be a fitting prelude to the mandate he was about to promulgate in respect of his son's disposition.

He supposed of course that John had gotten home by this time.

How he had contrived to get in without his having heard him he could not well understand, because sleep had only come to him in fits and starts until well on towards morning. But he supposed that Grace or his mother, as they were wont to do when the boy was out late, had waited and watched and surreptitiously let him in when he had returned.

He would not say anything to him this morning—anything in anger he meant. He would be very deliberate and determined in what he was about to do, and he would commence by taking the boy to church with him this morning. To-morrow, without any ceremony, he would lay before his son and heir the plan he had laid out for him and insist upon his adopting it forthwith.

With this resolved upon as his plan of campaign, he got out of bed, dressed himself and went down stairs to the dining room.

There he found his wife with her bonnet and furs on alone at the breakfast table.

"Good morning Emily," he said, with a conciliatory smile as he approached the blazing grate fire with outstretched palms.

"Good morning," responded the little woman with serious countenance as she alternately sipped and gazed down into her cup of coffee without looking up at him.

"I suppose that you're just going to church?" he remarked cheerfully.

"Just come from there," she replied frigidly, "we went to early mass."

"Oh, you did, ay? and where is Gracie?"

"I left her to walk home with Emily Ritter. She will be here shortly," she added after a short pause, during which he hesitatingly, as if about to ask another question, approached the rear door leading to the kitchen and servants' quarters.

He was about to ask at what time Jack had returned, but something in his better nature instigated him to forego the question.

Albeit as frigid and repelling in her manner as his wife was to him, there was something in the pallor of her drawn face and general appearance which betokened much suffering, and for the instant a pang of remorse shot through him for his utterances of last evening.

He would go out and ask Michael, the coachman, at what time that scapegrace of a boy had got in last night or this morning, and he left the room without saying anything further.

"What time did Master John get in last night, do you know, Michael?" enquired Mr. Rathbone as, on entering the commodious brick stable of the establishment, he found his Irish retainer busy rubbing down the horses, which had conveyed his mistress to church and back this morning.

"Sorra bit of me knows that, sor," replied Michael, continuing his currying and brushing.

"Isn't his pony in her stall?" and he went over to look. "No, she's not there," he said to himself rather than to the groom.

"Sure, his pony wouldn't be loikely to come home wid-out himself, sor, though she be a mighty wise pony, that same, sor."

"Where do you think he went to, Michael?"

"Well," said Michael, suspending his grooming and taking off his cap and wiping his face with his shirt sleeve, "You see I'd not be loikely to know where he wint, sor, unless Mather Jack towld me himself fwhere he was goin' before he wint away."

As a matter of fact, Michael was very well aware of where Jack had gone, but being a warm admirer of that young gentleman, he certainly was not going to admit it.

"I suppose he is somewhere over in Canada," observed Mr. Rathbone, as he turned to leave the stable.

"Maybe so, sor, maybe so—that's very true, sor," assented Michael, hissing and rubbing away demonstratively.

"Gone over to some low-down, French horse race, I suppose. I'll see whether I can't put a stop to this sort of thing!" added the turkey-gobbler spirit, as he proceeded on his way across the yard back to the house with rising choler.

"Bedad, thim Frinch is great for racin', sor, and no mistake," and ceasing his currying and hissing for an instant to glance at the retreating form of his employer, he added, "Tare an houns, but the bass is great at guessin,' and no mistake," and then he resumed his grooming and hissing with renewed vigor.

As Mr. Rathbone wended his way back to the dining room he may be said to have worked himself into a white heat of passion.

But upon the principle that extremes meet, these excessive tempers often induce a quieter and more deliberate style of utterance than do the red faced frothy spells which are so often the besetting sin of mortals otherwise comparatively unobjectionable.

When he entered the room where he found his wife still seated at the breakfast table, his blue eyes flashed forth a venomous gleam of wickedness, and the flesh upon his prominent cheek bones became abnormally white, while his side-whiskered jaw and large thin-lipped mouth were set with angry determination.

As he entered and stood upon the hearth rug with his back to the glowing fireplace, Mrs. Rathbone arose from her seat and turning, glanced at her husband with a look of trembling enquiry.

"Emily," he said in subdued voice.

"Yes Robert," she responded nervously.

"Of course you are aware that that boy has not got back yet?"

"Yes, Robert," she muttered with a little sob.

"Do you think his not having done so is a proper observance of the lenient rules and mild forms of discipline I have laid down for his guidance while he remains under this roof? Here it is church time, and yet he is away gallivanting about the country with some of his blackguard boon companions I've no doubt," and then he resumed the caged animal perambulation of the floor of the previous evening.

She would have remonstrated with the last part of this speech, but to do so would have obliged her to say that

Jack had set out with Charley Ford, and the name of Ford, of old time recollection after what had occurred last evening had better be left unspoken.

Finding that she received his question in silence, he flared up in louder, irrepressibly angry tones, "Yet you say that I am unjustifiably severe with him, and you and the girls have fallen into the habit of petting him and showing him as much consideration as if he were the most important personage in the world, and indispensable to the welfare and happiness of this household! You do this, I presume, to make amends for my alleged severity!"

The truth is much more likely of utterance in a passion than it proverbially is in jest.

"For well-nigh two years, now, I have had but little peace or satisfaction at home, here," he continued, "because of this absurd lionizing of the graceless, young ruffian!"

"Robert!" she said, with a flash of anger, as she straightened her *petite* figure up to its full height, while two large tears slowly coursed down her drawn cheeks, "Robert, though you doubt his being your own child, he does not deserve your calling him a graceless, young ruffian!"

He turned in his walk and paused for an instant before he said in a measurably apologetic manner: "Emily, I do not doubt his being my own child, and I have since regretted what I said last night. It would have been better unsaid."

"Oh Robert," she exclaimed, as if stricken to the heart, as she raised her hands above her head and fell limp into an arm chair. "You well-nigh broke my heart when you said that you doubted my honor as your wife!" and putting her

face in her hands upon her lap she sobbed as if her heart would really break.

Then he went to her, and raising her up from the chair in which she sat in such abandonment of grief, he took her in his arms tenderly and patted her upon her seal skin covered shoulders and soothingly begged of her not to take on in that manner.

"It makes me very unhappy to see you in this condition, Emily," he said in a very much mollified and conciliatory voice. "Come, don't cry, there's a good little woman. I was very much annoyed when I said what I did to you last night and I hope you'll forget it and put it away from your mind altogether."

The man though a consummate bully within the precincts of his own family circle, and a victim of one of the manifold and mysterious forms that all-absorbing passion, jealousy, sometimes assumes, was none the less on occasion capable of generous impulses.

He always was used to say of himself that he could never stand a woman's tears. This fact his wife and daughters were well aware of, and, the girls especially, in their contentions with him had often assumed the demonstratively lachrymose when they really did not feel to that extent effected for the sake of carrying their point with him which they rarely failed to do when this method was judiciously practiced.

There was, however, no assumption of an outward and visible show of grief that did not exist within the bosom of his wife now.

Last night's raking up of the skeleton of their early mar-

ried life had greatly shaken her, and the perturbed frame of mind which Jack's continued absence had thrown her into had not failed of adding fuel to the flame of her sorrows, and abject discomfiture.

It was, therefore, a great relief to her pent-up, harrowed feelings when the assurance fell upon her ears that he was sorry for what he had said last evening, and that he doubted not the legitimacy of her son, and a genuine overflow of down-pouring tears was the natural womanly consequence.

In reply to her husband's saying that he had a proposal to make with reference to what had best be done with Jack, amidst her gradually slackening sobs, she said: "Oh, Robert, I earnestly pray that something may be done that will bring greater harmony and contentment to us all."

"Well, then, this is what I propose to do with John, Emily," he replied, as he kissed her and slowly resumed his pacing of the floor; "You know that I have not been over-exacting with reference to my religious faith in the education of John thus far?"

"Yes, Robert, you have been very good and liberal, I'm sure," she assented, drying her eyes with a dainty lace handkerchief, as she stood upon the hearth rug.

"It was out of consideration for what I presumed to be your wishes upon the subject that I suggested, as a sort of compromise between us from a religious point of view, old man Hamilton's employment as his private tutor that he might complete his education under your own eye at home."

"Yes, Robert," she replied feelingly, with a shivering



sob, "and I have always felt the deepest sense of appreciation of your consideration for me in having done so."

"Unfortunately," he continued, "I have found out that in doing this I made a grave mistake, and that my good intentions to you in the premises have only resulted in bringing about a state of things which, I am resolved, shall no longer continue."

She might have said much in explanation of how this juncture had been reached—how that the lack of harmony, which had existed for these last past months, had been largely brought about by his own unnatural feelings of jealousy of his own son—but the spirit of recrimination, never strong within her, had left her altogether now, and she said nothing.

"Now this is what I propose shall be done and done at once," he said peremptorily. "John must be packed off bag and baggage to some one of the colleges in the country—Yale, Fordham or Havard. I don't care to what school he goes—so long as he leaves this house before the end of the week!"

The vehemence of the latter part of this speech again brought irrepressible tears to this doting little mother's eyes as she quietly acquiesced by saying: "Well, Robert, I suppose that is the best thing that can be done under the circumstances and I shall endeavor to have him ready to start whenever you say."

"I don't want to have anything more to say upon the subject," he said decisively, "when or how he shall start, so long as he starts before the end of this week, I leave to you entirely. I am too much out of patience with him to want

to have anything more to do with him until he has mended his ways. As to what particular school or college he goes to, that I shall also leave entirely to you—or perhaps," he added bitterly, "on second thought, you had better let the precious young scapegrace choose for himself what institution shall have the distinguished honor of developing his brilliant attainments."

After delivering which magnanimous mandate he ceased his pacing of the floor and took his seat at the head of the breakfast table.

"Very well, Robert," patiently assented the little woman, "Just as you say," and taking her seat at the table opposite him she remarked: "Shall I pour you out some coffee?"

"Yes, please. I think I shall go to church this morning."

"Going to church are you?" she exclaimed with irrepressible surprise. "I'm very glad you're going to church, Robert."

Thus it was that on this particular Sabbath morning the congregation of St. Pancras' Episcopal Church was furnished a cause for rejoicing in the tentative return to the fold of a long strayed sheep.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### *First Love's Conspiracy.*

GRACE WAS not disappointed in respect of finding her friend and boon companion at early mass.

There sat Miss Emily Ritter in the adjoining pew in all her native *nonchalant* grace of inanimate-looking flaxen hair, and premature tendency to embonpoint for one of scarce sixteen summers.

Howbeit, becomingly dressed in a close-fitting surtout of black fur with cap to match, she was not altogether ill to look upon so long as she allowed her capacious mouth and substantial lips to remain in repose, which, what with gum-chewing and voluble conversational powers, was a matter of rare occurrence, however.

She chewed gum continuously throughout the short service, while the expression of her pale-blue eyes took on a sort of far-away look, as if ineffectually attempting to distinguish objects at a distance through turbid water.

When she met Grace in the vestibule of the church after service, she chewed out her surprise that she and Mrs. Rathbone should have so departed from their usual practice of attending half past ten o'clock high mass.

"Well, now, Grace Rathbone!" she exclaimed. as that young person and her mother emerged from the sacred edifice, "who'd have ever thought of seeing you at early mass this morning? Pray, whose yoke of oxen hauled you

out of bed in time to get here at eight o'clock? Whoever they belong to, they're prize animals, any way, because my experience of you is that you're the greatest stay-abled in Michigan! Good morning, Mrs. Rathbone; early rising doesn't seem to agree with you either, because you're looking unusually pale. Hope you haven't been sick?" with which tender, albeit brusque, enquiry this flaxen-haired maiden came to the end of her tether as to breath, as it were.

"Oh, no, Emily," replied Mrs. Rathbone, smilingly, "I've not been ill; and we're not such slow coaches in the morning as you seem to think we are," she added, reprovingly. "How is your mother, my dear?"

"Oh, as well as could be expected, thank you, Mrs. Rathbone. You know, for a long time past, I have been coming to early church Sundays so as to let ma come to high mass."

"That's a very good and considerate thing to do, dear," assented the little woman, pleasantly.

"Because, you know, we couldn't both be away from the house at the same time," continued Miss Ritter. "That confounded rheumatic gout of pa's has made him so nervous and crotchety, that one of us must be within call every minute of the day and night. If he didn't have one of us always handy by to order around and nag and scold at, I believe he'd take a fit and go off in a blue flame, like Jacob Faithful's mother! I really do believe he would! Why, Grace, what's the matter with you this morning?"

"Nothing's the matter with me," responded the sylph.

"Does early rising affect your tongue? You're as silent as a wooden Indian and look as glum as one too."

"If you'd have said blind Indian you'd have been nearer the mark," observed Grace as they reached the outer threshold where Mrs. Rathbone stopped to talk with one of her pensioners among the indigent of the congregation.

"Why blind Indian pray?" queried Miss Ritter.

"Because you've pretty nearly talked me blind already."

"Oh, pshaw! You get out! You're always saying or insinuating that I talk too much. Well, I dare say I do talk a good deal—but I suppose I was born that way."

"What! Surely you don't mean to say that you could talk when you were born do you?" laughingly exclaimed Miss Rathbone.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, no, of course I didn't mean that, but I am quite sure that I could cry."

"Any baby can do that."

"Well, crying is next to talking."

"Then you must have done a heap of crying when you were an infant," and having reached the sidewalk the dainty Miss Gracie, out of hearing of her mother, gushingly and confidently changed the subject abruptly by exclaiming:

"Oh, Emily! I want you to give me a pressing invitation to go home with you this morning—but of course you musn't let mamma know that I suggested to you to do so."

"Why, what do you take me for?" queried Miss Ritter with disgust in her voice, "Talking about being born, that event didn't happen with me yesterday."

"I have got something very especially particular to talk and advise with you about," continued the sylph, "very particular indeed."

"Well, what's the matter with you're telling a fellow about it now then."

"No, no, wait till mamma goes home, haven't time now! Here she comes. Now don't fail me Emily!"

As Mrs. Rathbone, having finished her interview with her impecunious *protege* joined the girls at the carriage which was drawn up along-side the curb, Emily gushingly exclaimed in appealing tones: "Oh, Mrs. Rathbone, I do so wish you'd let Grace come home to breakfast with me this morning. I want to show her the new dress I got home from the dressmaker's last night, and I'll walk home with her afterwards."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Rathbone looking at Grace, "would you like to go home with Emily for a little while?"

"Yes, mamma, I'd like to go very much if you don't mind going home alone," and a pang of remorse flashed across the inner conscience of this arch schemer.

"Oh, no, I don't mind," remarked the amiable little mater as she stepped into the carriage, "I shall expect you to come home early. Mind you come home with her Emily, and ask your mamma to allow you to stop to dinner with us. Good-bye," and the little woman nodded her head smilingly to the two conspirators as the carriage drove off rapidly.

"Well, now, Madame Von Bismarek," exclaimed Miss Ritter, masticating her quid of gum with renewed vigor, turning to Grace, "what is your little game? Propound your policy, fulminate your project! Anything special in the wind?" and they proceeded to walk leisurely along.

"Well," replied the sylphide, as she nervously gazed down at her dainty little feet as they alternately bobbed forth from beneath her dress skirt, "I suppose, Emily, you would do anything in reason for Jack, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, you can just bet I would, and a good deal out of reason, too, if it came to a pinch! Jack's one of my kind! No nonsense about Johnnie—but just level-headed and reliable. I just think he's the nicest young fellow in the city! I know he doesn't think me a regular, full-fledged houri in point of personal appearance, but I know he likes me in a friendly way, and I reciprocate his friendship. But it's only friendship, you know; no such thing as namby pamby love could exist 'twixt Jack and I."

"Well, then, said the sylph, looking up at her voluble and rotund friend, "I must tell you that Jack's got into great trouble, and I'm afraid something awful is going to happen!"

"Why, what's the matter with him? What's he been doing?" and Miss Ritter ceased her gum-chewing and gazed upon her nervous little companion with anxiety and concern depicted upon her countenance. "Has he been doing something he ought not to have done?"

"Well, papa thinks so, anyway; and he's in a towering rage about it."

"What is it? What has he done—robbed a bank or murdered anybody?"

"Oh, no! nothing so very dreadful. He went up to Belle River to a race yesterday morning and hasn't got back yet; and you know papa had forbidden his going to any more of those kind of races without his express per-



mission. I am sure if I'd supposed that there was going to be such a fuss made about his going, I should never have helped him away."

"Why, how did you help him away?"

"You know I go to the convent for my music lesson on Saturday mornings, and yesterday I pretended that I didn't feel well enough to walk, and asked mamma to let Jack drive me. In that way he contrived to get Bijou and the sleigh out of the stable without being obliged to give an account of where he was going."

"That was very sisterly and very proper of you—just what I'd have done. Only I think I'd have left the music for some future day and gone to the race with him."

"Oh, Emily!" exclaimed the sylph blushing. "I could not have gone with Jack yesterday."

"Well I should have if I'd been in your place—that is if he'd have consented to take me of course—and your father is kicking up Dido about it, ay?"

"Yes, he's just rampant!" asserted Gracie.

"Well, confound those old men anyway! I know what they are when they get their backs up, you bet!" oracularly observed Miss Ritter. "We've got one at our house who, from morning till night, now that he's got that rheumatic gout, day in and day out, week days, Sundays, holidays and holy days—it makes no difference when—wears a hump on his back as big as a camel. I'll back him for cantankerousness against any aged gentleman citizen of these United States and pay anybody that'll take the bet. Oh, yes, I know what a grumbling, nagging old man is! It's only

sometimes with you at your house, but it's come to stay with us."

"Well, I hope it's not come to stay with us," tremulously exclaimed Miss Rathbone. "I never saw papa so beside himself as he was last night, and I've seen him angry with Jack very often."

"Well, what do you think is going to be done with him when he returns on this occasion?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied the sylph nervously, forgetting for the moment the main object of her morning's expedition. "Mamma has always heretofore contrived to smooth matters over for Jack with papa, but I am afraid something awful is going to happen this time."

"Your father is certainly not going to try to whip him, is he? because from what I know of Jack, that would be a big undertaking if he didn't choose to submit."

"Oh, of course papa would not attempt to whip Jack! My brother is too much of a man for that now," proudly assented the sylph with confidence, "but I'm afraid he's going to do something far worse."

"Why, what on earth can he do? He is not going to shoot his own son, surely! And he can't have him put in jail, because going to a race at Belle River is not a criminal offense, if I know anything about the laws of this great and glorious country!"

"No," responded Grace, with a little sob, as she put her handkerchief up to her eyes, "I think he'll be sent away from home—banished, you know—at least for a short time."

"Well, worse things than that might take place, I'm sure. It might turn out the best thing that could happen Jack to

be sent away somewhere for a time. To see a little of the world outside of Detroit would certainly not injure him. But what are you going to do about it? What has all this got to do with your wanting me to invite you to breakfast this morning?" enquired Miss Ritter, with vibratory jaws, as they reached the corner of the street leading to the Ritter habitation.

"I'll tell you, Emily," simperingly replied the dainty little schemer, as she became intent upon her pretty little feet again; "I thought it would be a good thing to go down to the ferry and meet Jack when he comes over, and tell him how matters stand at home; and I'd like you to go with me."

"Why, of course I'll go with you," assented the other gushingly, "and right glad if I thought it would do Jack any good," she added, as she took her quid of gum out of her mouth and kneaded it between her fore finger and thumb. "But I must say that I fail to see the merit of telling a fellow beforehand that he's going to be annihilated when he returns to the parental roof after a truant absence."

To this, the now subdued and crest-fallen little schemer made no reply as they turned and took their way in the direction of the ferry landing.

"Did anybody go to Belle River with Jack?" asked Miss Ritter as, after inspecting her chew of gum intently and absently for an instant, she restored it back to her mouth again.

"Go to Belle River with Jack, did you say, Emily?"

"Yes, did anybody from the city go to the race with

him?" repeated Emily pointedly, gazing upon the mantling little face of the conscious sylph and munching away at her gum voraciously.

"Why, yes, Emily," replied the little one with affected surprise. "Didn't I tell you before? Why, Charley Ford went with him, you know."

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed Miss Ritter in tones of disgust. "I'm just too green to live in the winter time. Why, of course! Now I know why you're so anxious to go down to meet Jack at the ferry!"

"Oh, Emily!" remonstrated the sylph with face aflame. "No, you don't, either."

"Yes, I do, though," insisted the other as she demonstratively munched away. "Of course I do! and all I've got to say is that you're welcome to your fancy."

"I haven't got any fancy! you know I haven't, Emily!" intent upon the sidewalk.

"No, I don't know anything of the sort Miss Rathbone, either! I've got ears to hear as any one who'll condescend to look at me will see for himself or herself without the aid of magnifying glasses; and my eyes, although they may not be absolutely dazzling orbs, suit me well enough to see with."

"But you're wrong about my having any special fancy for anyone," deprecated the blushing little schemer.

"Oh, no, I'm not wrong," urged Emily confidently. "But what Jack can see in that dude to be always toting him about with him is more than I can explain to my own satisfaction."

"What do you mean by a dude?" demurely asked Grace, looking ahead of her.

"A dude! why he's a thing in tight pants and pointed shoes, a high, shiny, stiff dog collar—the chief foundation of his little head, and a beard, (if he's old enough to grow one) that looks like another man's back hair parted in the middle, plastered on his chin, a tight fitting cut-away coat, a round top hard hat, and when he's an extra fine sample of the breed, he wears a short stick and a rimless eye glass stuck in his right eye."

"But Charley Ford doesn't wear a short stick and an eye glass," interposed Gracie deprecatingly.

"No, I know he doesn't—at least I never saw him wear one," qualified Miss Ritter, "but if he doesn't, it's because he's only half-fledged as yet. You just wait until he gets all his feathers and you'll see that he'll blossom forth into a dude with the closest observance to details of costume, as theatrical managers say of their performances. Well, there's the boat just coming in now," added this gum-chewing despiser of the genus dude as they neared the ferry landing at the foot of the street, "and I don't see any grey pony and sleigh on the forward deck."

"No, neither do I," assented the sylph disappointedly absorbed in an inward contemplation of what a queer compound of human idiocyncrasies a dude and a prototype of Jesse James all rolled up into one man would make. "It's the Victoria too, the boat Jack usually crosses on," she added.

"Well, we'll wait until the people get off," suggested the practical Miss Ritter, "and then we'll go on board and ask

the Captain if they came over with him on any of his previous trips this morning."

And following this suggestion the two girls silently stood without the exit gangway and waited until the passengers, a large number of them intending worshipers at the various churches in the city that morning, streamed off the ferry boat.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### *Friendly Relations, or Ultimate Annexation?*

TO STRANGERS visiting the neighborhood for the first time—those having a proper understanding of the hampered nature of trade relations between the two countries—the constant stream of travel and traffic between Detroit and Windsor is ever a matter of surprise, not to say wonder.

If that at present problematical chimera, annexation, were ever brought about, while Detroit would be enormously advantaged as a trade centre, in that it would make her the *entrepot* of the most fertile and productive portion of southern Ontario, in addition to her already tributary possessions in that regard, Windsor would feel the transition less from a social point of view and be more materially benefited in the enhancement of values of real estate than would any other Canadian town along the frontier.

At present a *quasi* suburb of the City of the Straits, with annexation, she would inevitably become a sort of South Detroit—as Brooklyn is to New York, if not absolutely part and parcel of her fair metropolitan neighbor—so strong is the social and commercial affinity 'twixt the two cities.

But, for that matter, do not advocates of closer national relations claim that this same affinity, to a marked degree, belongs to the two countries at large, albeit they each of



them have a brusque way of showing it at times, to use a mild phrase?

Yet, from a Canadian's point of view, there would seem to be something touchingly melancholy in the bare thought of his being cajoled, negotiated or forced into relinquishing so fair a national heritage as he possesses in his vast and prolific domain, and the superior judiciary laws he enjoys under a more utterly democratic form of government than have his brothers at the south of him.

He argues that he has everything to be proud of in the twenty-two years of his young national life; that the development of his country's boundless resources, though still upon the threshold of its being, has thus far been productive of marvelous results, and that with an abiding faith and pride in his national birth-right, he can work out his own destiny and maintain his own national identity upon the lines laid down with the inauguration of confederation in 1867.

It goes without saying that this will be the attitude assumed and firmly upheld by the French portion of Canada's population when the question of annexation takes on a tangible form or shape with a definite coloring as a living issue before the Canadian people.

In the meantime certain of their politicians, to serve ephemeral party ends, may find it in them to coquet with the question; but when the time comes, if come it must, the descendants of *La Nouvelle France*, judging them by the light of their heroically unique and conservative history upon this continent, will be found to a man shoulder to shoulder, defending the identity of their language and

the maintenance of their "peculiar institutions" which, in the event of Canada's absorption into the Union, would of necessity cease and determine as guaranteed privileges.

The untrammelled exercise of these guaranteed privileges, since confederation, in that part of the Dominion known as the Province of Quebec, has made that part of Canada more French than many parts of old France, and from a religious point of view perhaps the most so-called *ultra Montane* country in the civilized world.

From the vantage ground of that Province during the last dozen years and more, have been promulgated teachings designed to set aflame in vigorous glow an *esprit de corps* as to its national origin and entity which had languished and declined to the condition of slowly dying embers with the descendants of the French race outside the limits of its own confines.

Hence it is now that we hear of French aggression in Ontario and Manitoba, and an irrepressible conflict would seem to have been inaugurated. Nor has the influence of these teachings been confined to the limits of the Dominion.

It has extended itself to Northern Michigan, Wisconsin, the eastern manufacturing states, and wherever communities of French Canadians are to be found established throughout the union.

While fifteen years ago it was no uncommon thing in the states bordering on the dominion, to hear two French Canadians carrying on a conversation in broken English with each other, as if they were ashamed of their own mother tongue, now they prefer and seem proud of their own native patois as a means of inter-communication.

In respect of Quebec's attitude with reference to the English speaking provinces, which constitute the great bulk of the Dominion confederation, if one chose to indulge in analogy one might plausibly demonstrate that, with her guaranteed "peculiar institutions," her position as to the union of the British provinces on this continent assimilates very strongly to what was that of the Southern States and their institution of slavery in respect of the American union before the late civil war in this country.

Then there is another coincidence belonging to the two positions which might be profitably speculated upon by Canadians, and that is that while the Southern States practically controlled the government of the union up to the first election of Mr. Lincoln, the Province of Quebec has been the *de facto* ruler of the destinies of Canada since the union of the two Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841.

When the South lost her control she withdrew from the Union, fired upon Fort Sumpter and let loose the dogs of war; and there are those who say that they can see a handwriting upon the wall, indicating a similar course on the part of the French province as to the Canadian Union so soon as the time shall become ripe for it.

Should history repeat itself, as it were, in this manner, then would annexation become a tangible issue and perchance a practical proposition; but until then, Canada will be likely to prefer to paddle her own canoe after her own democratic methods as part and parcel of the British Empire.

However this may be, the present neighborly intercourse existing between the two sides of the border at Detroit and

Windsor, despite custom's exactions, is likely to continue; and the latter city, because of the number of Detroiters who are constantly taking up their residences there, is practically becoming a handsomely embellished civic adjunct to her larger and fairer cousin across the noble river.

Nothing has contributed more to bringing about this state of things than the admirably systematic and punctual ferry service which exists between the two cities. This is performed by an organization known as the "Detroit Belle Isle and Windsor Ferry Company," whose five large steamers, for the purpose they were designed, are unique specimens of marine architecture.

The harbinger of the line and peculiar style of model of the "Victoria" which was designed by her one-time Captain, now the manager of the line.

When that gallant mariner descended from his pilot house to the main deck of the vessel after landing on the American side on the particular Sunday morning referred to in the last chapter, little Grace Rathbone and her loquacious friend Emily Ritter approached him. "Good morning captain," said Emily.

"Good morning, young ladies, good morning," replied the skipper with unctuous hospitality, "going over to Europe with us?"

It may be well to explain that the Canadian side of the river at this point is often facetiously called "Europe" by both ferrymen and their patrons.

"No, we're not going across this morning, we simply wanted to know whether young Mr. Rathbone and his pony and sleigh have crossed with you from the other side this

morning or not?" and Miss Ritter's jaws paused for reply.

"You know him when you see him, don't you captain?" queried Grace.

"Oh yes, miss, I know young Mr. Rathbone right well. No, he hasn't crossed the river this morning, that I'm sure of, because you see this being Sunday, we are the only boat running up to this time this morning."

"Then I suppose we'd better go back and loaf about until he does come over, hadn't we Gracie?" suggested Emily.

"Yes, I suppose that's the only thing we can do."

"Mr. Rathbone crossed with me yesterday morning," observed the captain, "and I had some conversation with him as he drove aboard on this side. He told me that he was going up to the Widow Martin's at Belle River to a race."

"Yes, that's where he went and he hasn't got back yet," replied Grace regretfully.

"I suppose he couldn't get away. Those French races sometimes last till after dark, and if he stopped at the widow's all night he will probably have started from there to drive back along about eight o'clock, and if so he ought to be along pretty soon now," and then the genial mariner, assuming a quizzical tone, continued, "but see here young ladies, ain't this pretty early Sunday morning to be looking for your fellahs?"

"We're not looking for our 'fellahs' captain," exclaimed the ready witted Emily. "This is Miss Gracie Rathbone and she is looking for her brother who crossed with you yes-

terday morning," this with such stress upon the brother as made the sylphide's cheeks tingle.

"Ah, that's it, is it? Glad to know you Miss Rathbone," and the skipper touched his cap gallantly. "I've known your father well on to thirty years now, and Mr. Ritter, his partner too, I have known for very nearly as long."

"This is Miss Emily Ritter, Mr. Ritter's daughter," said Grace, addressing the Captain as with her hands in her pretty little muff she nodded her head at that young lady.

"Oh, I see, this is Miss Ritter, ay? Pleased to know you miss," and the captain again touching his cap politely continued, "Well then, we have the whole firm of Rathbone & Ritter represented right here, haven't we?"

"Yes, captain," replied Emily as she ground away at her gum, "we represent the domestic interests of the firm of Rathbone & Ritter on this occasion and I want you particularly to understand that the representative of the junior partner hasn't got a 'fellah' and what's more isn't hankering after one either."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the skipper, "well that's a kind o'remarkable I must say. Why, a good-looking young lady like you—"

"Oh, you get out, captain!" interposed Miss Ritter with a toss of her head, "none of your blarney—I know just how good-looking I am."

"Well then, how is it that you have'n't half a dozen 'fellahs' dangling after you?" demanded the captain chaffingly.

"Because I don't want them."

"Ah, yes, that must be it; but you mustn't take offense at what I say, Miss Ritter."

"Oh, I'm not offended."

"That's right," remarked the skipper, approvingly. "You see if we ferry-men weren't allowed to joke with our passengers sometimes, ours would be a very dull and monotonous business."

"Yes, I suppose it would," assented the voluble one, "and you can joke with me whenever I cross with you — pleased to have you."

"Well, now, since we've had our joke this morning, come along and go over with us for a ride. You'll probably find Master Rathbone on the dock waiting to come across when we get over there."

"Well, what do you say, Grace," asked Emily, "shall we go?"

"Yes, thank you, captain," replied the sylphide demurely; "I think it would be nice to go over when there's so much ice in the river; its so exciting."

"That's right, come right along, young ladies. I must go back to my post in the pilot house now," and he turned to move away.

"See here, captain!" cried Emily, jocularly, "wait a moment; I want to tell you before you go that I guess I'm the only girl on this boat this trip that hasn't got a 'fella'," and she motioned meaningly towards Grace.

"Oh, I twig!" exclaimed the jolly ferry-man. "I think I understand how the land lies now. Mr. Charley Ford went up to Belle River with Mr. Rathbone yesterday, and I

suppose he'll be coming back with him this morning, won't he?"

Poor little schemer; how her face burned!

"Yes," assented Miss Ritter, with a twinkle in her eye and a nod of her head, as she munched at her gum, "that's the calculation."

"Mr. Ford is a great friend of mine. Knew his father, Gustavus Ford, well, too. I think Charley is about the handsomest young man in the city—but I must get into that pilot house and leave now. Good-bye for the present, young ladies; see you on the other side," and the master of the Victoria rapidly ascended the stairway leading to the pilot house.

And now the poor little schemer, with mingled feelings of pride and shame, tremblingly said to the cruel Miss Ritter: "Emily, I think you're just a real mean thing! and the captain, with all his politeness, is an impudent old fellow! that's what he is!"

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed the other; "what's struck you, Miss Rathbone? Why, didn't you hear the captain say that Charley Ford was the handsomest young man in the city? How could you call him an impudent old fellow after that?"

"Well, I don't care what he said; he's an impudent old thing!" exclaimed the sylphide sharply, with changing color. "I don't see how it is that you are always down on Charley Ford."

"Because he's down upon me.

"Our love is mutual, this we know."



And Miss Ritter proceeded to hum the air of the song.

"Well, then, I don't see why you should be constantly introducing his name when there's no necessity for it."

"I am not constantly introducing his name!"

"Yes, you are! and I'm very sorry I asked you to come—there now!" and the dainty little Gracie's face was aflame with tremulous anger.

"Well, so am I sorry you asked me to come on such an expedition!" chewed out Miss Ritter with indifference as they went to the side of the now moving steamer.

As the powerful vessel moved away from her wharf and breasted the thickly frozen water field the girls gazed over the railing at the receding ice over which with loud sounding vibration they seemed to fly.

Further crimination and recrimination as to Mr. Charley Ford was therefore put a stop to between them for the time being.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Jacobin Clocks and "Le chemin de crois."*

**T**HERE WAS a remarkable coincidence in the conduct of the two clocks which marked the hours and regulated the going and the coming, the rising and retiring at the Widow Martin's tavern on the memorable Saturday night of the particular ball involved in these chronicles at that hospitable caravansary.

When the highly respectable-looking, old-fashioned, heavy-weighted, long-pendulum gentleman, standing in the southwest corner of the dining-hall ball room, who slowly ticked Time's fleeting sands away, reached the twenty-second hour plus the fortieth minute of the twenty-third hour of that memorable day, a close observer might have perceived that his hands had ceased to move and his ticks had ceased to tick.

While the square shaped, Sam Slick plebian party, who scored time for the Avenger behind the bar counter, suspended operations just three minutes later, or at exactly ten forty-three P. M., to be accurate.

This, it is presumed in the case of the venerable and vibratory, albeit dignified and upright, gentleman in the dining-hall ball room was due to a tender feeling of solicitude for him in his headlong, irrevocable career on the part of a bevy of laughing, giggling girls, who hovered about his tall, black-walnut frame at precisely the moment of his cessation of business; while the hourly and vulgarly reso-

nant Sam Slick, perched amidst the bottles and decanters on the shelves behind the bar counter, was induced to suspend his occupation of second clipping by the accommodating and sympathetic barkeeper.

Meanwhile the only intermissions of varying lengths between the dances were caused by the constantly recurring desire for refreshment on the part of the band which seemed, however, not perceptibly to influence his mental or physical condition.

"Mons. Duplessis," said Rosalie Martin in French to him on his return to the ball room from one of his periodic foraging expeditions, "if you'll not go into the bar again before supper I'll make you a nice present of something, you'll see if I don't!"

"But when are we going to have supper *ma chere* Madam-oiselle? I'm sure it must be past twelve and *Mon Dieu!* but I am hungry."

"What are you saying to the professor?" asked Charley Ford, on whose arm Rosalie leaned—Mr. Ford's knowledge of French was somewhat crude and imperfect.

"Ah am telling heem" she explained in her pretty accent, "dat eef he weel not go into de bar any more beefore suppeer Ah weel mac heem a present of someting."

"Yes Moses, and I'll give you a half a dollar if you'll not take another drink before supper," added Charley.

"Tank you, monsieur! tank you! but *Mon Dieu!* when we wus goan have suppeer? Ah wus moss starve now! Bah gosh! Ah wus hungray lac a peeg."

"But you don't look hungry," observed Charley as he quizzically gazed upon Monsieur Duplessis' ungainly and

greasy proportions as he ascended to his perch on the dry goods box in the southeast corner.

"Well, Ah feels hungray jews de sam," grunted Moses, "an tirstay too! Ah'll toll you, Monsieur, dare wus nutting lac play de feedle fur mac a mans hungray an tirstay bote at de sam tam!"

"Well, play a polka for us now and I guess supper will not be very far off by the time you finish. Will it Miss Rose?"

"Oh, no, eet ees most near ready now."

"*Eh bien mes amis!*" called out Mons. Duplessis as he resumed his seat on the rostrum, "took yo pardneur fur a polkay an after dat Ah guess we goan have sum suppeur," and as he leant over to take his fiddle out of its box he oracularly continued, "eef you doan feed yo hoss he coo'n't wuck! Eef you doan wine yo clock she's not go! an eef you doan geeve yo feedleur sumting to heat an sumting for drink he coo'n't feedell, dat's sure ting!"

But when, after a due amount of discordant see-sawing in the preliminary process of tuning up, *Monsieur le Professeur* did commence the production of an ante-diluvian air with resonant pedal taps upon the rostrum as an accompaniment, the polka did not prove an especially huge success.

At least not to the extent an old-fashioned waltz or quadrille or cotillion would have been with the *beaux esprits* of the neighborhood.

Not more than four or five couples out of the large number present were on the floor at any one time during the jiggy staccato and not always concordant measures of Mons. Duplessis' fiddle and bow; while the onlookers gazed upon

these, if not with envious eyes, at least with askant air, as if they felt they were being practiced upon by reason of their lack of knowledge of fashionable metropolitan airs and graces.

Hence it shortly came about that Mademoiselle Rosalie's sense of the proprieties as assistant hostess on the occasion, soon prompted her to forego the beguiling delight of being swung about the room on the strong right arm of the graceful and handsome Mr. Charley Ford; and coming to a standstill for lack of breath near to the professor's rostrum, she gave the latter to understand that the polka might come to a *finale*, which was accomplished on the instant without unnecessary flourish by the half famished and ever thirsty band.

Jack Rathbone was not an enthusiastic lover of dancing and, as has been said before, not an especial votary of the tenderer sex of his own age.

He had danced twice with Blanche, Peter Bertrand's pretty daughter, and once each with Rosalie Martin and other girls, but he was more particularly attentive to the widow, and in a spirit of badinage even went so far as to assure that festive matron that he would like to try conclusions with her in a two-handed reel, which only made her laughingly say: "Oh, no, Monsieur Ratbone, Ah weel nevaire dance no more aftaire dees. Ah have revenge ole Crapaud bah beatin Pierro Bertrand to-night, an Ah am well sateesfy."

"But wouldn't you like to revenge yourself upon me, too, in the same way?" remonstrated Jack, quizzically.

"What Ah want revenge meself on one of mah good fren

"lao you wus, Monsieur Ratbone?" queried the widow, opening her pretty eyes to their widest and gazing upon Jack smilingly.

"Why, because Peter has named the little chestnut after me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the owner of Crapaud, "dat wus good joke. Why, Monsieur Jack, de way Ah feel jews now acose he have beat us to-day, Ah tink hees nam wus de bess part ov de ponay. Oh, no, ole Crapaud have reetire from de race beesness an hees meestress have reetire from dancin. Why don't you go an got one ov dem young gell standin bah de clock een de corneur ovaire dare, Mons. Ratbone?" and lowering her voice to a whisper she bent her head over towards Jack's ear and said: "Ah kin tell you one ting: dey wus all een love wit you!" and squeezing Jack's arm with both hands, with many confirmatory nods of her head, she passed out into the kitchen to look after preparations for supper.

But any little flattering episode of the evening like this, or any of Jack's attempts at jollity, were pervaded by constantly recurring thoughts of his return home on the morrow. He was haunted by a premonition that something unusual was in store for him against his return to the parental roof; and while he was not physically one jot afraid of any possible consequences that might accrue from his presence there that evening, he was made morally nervous whenever he contemplated the probable results of his father's attacks upon his mother's comfort and happiness in consequence of this surreptitious outing.

In the pauses of conversation with his various partners,

commencing with Blanche Bertrand in the opening quadrille, throughout the night his thoughts would ever revert back to this and he cannot be said to have enjoyed himself unless it was when absorbed in listening to Peter Bertrand and other elderly male guests talk horse and racing experiences in the comfortable sitting room across the front entrance hall from the bar.

Here assembled around the open chimney fire-place certain of the non-dancers of the occasion which, since the opening of the two-hand reel, included Peter Bertrand, and, with a number of other congenial spirits as well, no less a personage than Monsieur Badeeshow, the loquacious judicial spokesman at the race during the afternoon.

In the far corner of the room around a small unpainted pine table lighted by a solitary, smoky, coal oil lamp sat five undemonstrative and silent individuals absorbed in a game of draw poker at "five-cent ante."

These consisted of the dapper and oleaginous little sweat-board faker of the afternoon, the solemn, twinkle-eyed Franco-Yankee, Wheel of Fortune man, a dark-eyed man of sombre, swarthy feature, whom his familiars addressed as "Denis," (and the small faker as "Mistoo Goathere,") Mr. Budd Doble, Junior, otherwise Dave, the driver of Crapaud in the race, now keenly and soberly on the alert to retrieve his losses on "dat leetle chesnut plug's" victory, and last but not by any means least, a bald headed party somewhat below the medium height when he stood upon his feet, who was addressed as "Faro" a nickname given him by his intimates in signification of his partiality for games of chance and who was understood to be the sportive pro-

prietor of the "Dew Drop Inn," a well known hostelry, situated on the river bank down towards the city.

The latter was manifestly a man of serenely good humor, who possessed the faculty to a marked degree of uttering facetious observations in a mixture of French and English jargon peculiarly his own.

Around the card players sat and stood a cordon of eager lookers-on, who were even more silent than the players themselves. The absorbed taciturnity of this far corner made the not infrequently chaotic conversation of the sitters at and around the table in the centre of the room, immediately before the fire-place, more conspicuous than it perhaps otherwise would have been.

And thus above the din and discord of incoherent French and English discussions there would periodically arise the sonorous and authoritative colloquial strains of the rotund Monsieur Badeeshow.

Flushed with the effects of good company and the fumes of congenial beverages, that gentleman was now unbended as far as his wonted jealous preservation of his dignity, drunk or sober, would permit, and withal disposed to be discursively oracular upon any subject included in the repertory of his information which, apart from his knowledge of the rules governing *habitant* horse races, chiefly centred itself in municipal politics.

With two grown-up sons at home to look after the farm, he had long since become a man of leisure, and for the ten years last past a perennial candidate for a seat in the council of his native municipality.

He knew the history and apparent cost of every bridge,



ditch and culvert within the limits of the township in which he lived, and was at any time eagerly prepared to join issue with any one who might venture to dispute the wisdom of any of his votes in the council.

Much of the evening in the bar and sitting room had been consumed by Councillor Badeeshow in an animated discussion with several of his quondam supporters as to the judiciousness of his having leant his vote and influence towards the expenditure of certain county moneys in the opening of a certain new road.

In his own estimation Mr. B. had completely vindicated his action in the premises, and now, redolent of victory and many incidental drinks, he was prepared to talk horse, tell a story or join in the chorus of *un chanson de ramme*.

"Ah, Monsieur Ratbone," he said benignly to Jack, as that young gentleman edged up towards the fire-place in sitting room, "Ah hopes you was anjye yoseff all raght, monsieur."

"Oh, yes, thank you, Mr. Badeeshow, I'm getting on all right."

"Come an took dees chair here, Monsieur Jack, and talk wit Monsieur Badeeshow," exclaimed Peter Bertrand, as he arose from his seat near the councillor.

"Oh, no, no, Peter," remonstrated Jack, "I'd prefer to stand here with my back to the fire, thank you."

"But weel you keep dees chair for me for wan meeneet, see you please," appealed the other. "Ah wants to go an spoke wit mah dautteur," and he handed the chair over to Jack politely.

"All right then," said the latter, "I'll keep it until you come back if you're not too long."

"What you want goan see yo dauteur fo Pierro?" demanded Mons. Badeeshow taking his long clay pipe out of his mouth and gazing up towards the top of Mr. Bertrand's tall form, "Ah hopes you wus not goan spile heur fun!"

"Aw, no, Ah doan want spile heur fun *mais* Ah doan want lose mah fun some udder tam needer," responded Peter as he straightened himself up to his full height and with both hands excavated his huge hunting case silver watch from his fob pocket, and opening it, gazed upon its veracious face, muttering to himself the while.

"What do you mean by losing your fun some other time, Peter?" enquired Jack, settling himself in the chair alongside Mons. Badeeshow.

"Well, you see," replied the owner of "dat leetle chesnut plug," as he restored his watch to its fob, "eet was jews lac dees: De las tam Ah wus to a ball eet wus bout dees tam las year, up to Stony Pint, on Sateurday night, too; an Ah wus go dare fur chaperon an took care of mah dauteur, jews de sam as Ah wus come here dees evening. Well, de fokes at dat ball have stop all de clock on de house an dance teel bout tree clock on de morning, an mah dauteur, Blanche, have dance wit it. *Eh bein!* Ah have taught nutting bout dat at de tam, an, een fac, Ah have nevaire taught nutting bout dat teel Ah have go to de sacristy of our church fur do mah Easter dooty lass spring. Den, *par example*, de pries have mac me reecollec dat all raght, Ah'll toll you!" and Mr. Bertrand again put into practice his

peculiar fashion of emphasizing his meaning by compressing his lips firmly and solemnly, and slowly nodding his head repeatedly.

"But the priest was not at the ball, was he, Peter?" asked Jack.

"Aw, no, de pries wus not at de ball, fur sure," with a smile at Jack's lack of sophistry.

"Well then how did he come to know what went on there then Peter?"

"How deed de pries know what's go on at dat ball?" asked Mr. Bertrand in tones of withering pity for Jack's ignorance of the *curé's* all-pervading knowledge of what transpired in the parish, "why av course de pries know everyting what's go on on de *paroisse*."

"But you did not dance yourself, did you Peter?" queried Jack, "I remember that you told me that the two-hand reel you had with Widow Martin this evening was the first time you had danced in ten years."

"Yas, an dat wus a fac too, but you see de pries have say dat Ah have do wuss dan eef Ah have dance on Sunday morning meseff! Ah have 'low mah eenocent chile which Ah have go to dat ball een de cappasseetay of heur faddeur an fur took care of heur to dance afeur twelve o'clock Satuerday night an dat wus wuss dan eef Ah have do dat meseff! An so, *par conseekonce*," continued Mr. Bertrand authoritatively, as he pulled down his waistcoat and brushed off the lappels of his frock coat with the palm of his right hand, "*Mon pere* have say dat Ah wus rayspon-sayble fur dat."

"Aw, yas, for sure you wus!" oracularly assented Mons. Badeeshow with confirmatory nods of his partially bald head, and a judicial air, "you wus raysponsible for dat an suepose you have git pooty good beeg penneetannce too, en? Dee'nt you, Pierro?"

"Well, you could jews bet yo laf Ah have got beeg penneetannce for dat!" exclaimed Peter, solemnly nodding his head as he sidled towards the door. "Ah have crawl roun de chuch on mah han an knee tree tam an raypate tree *chaplet* at every station! dat's what wus mah penneetannce fur leave mah dautteur dance afeur twelve o'clock on Sateurday naght, an Ah wus not very ankshus fur do dat agin, Ah'll toll yu! So Ah guess Ah goan do mah dooty dees tam," and Mr. Bertrand bowed his Herculean frame through the door on his way to the dancing room to enjoin Blanche, 'aughter, from shaking her foot after twelve o'clock.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### *A Little Theology and a "Pat Hand."*

**W**AS YOU Cattaleeck, Monsieur Ratbone?" asked Mr. Badeeshow of Jack, after Peter's departure from the sitting room.

"No, I go to the English Episcopal church."

"Aw, you wus Angleeck Peescopal, ay? Well, Ah have heerd dat dat releejohn wus mo lac our chuch dan any of de udder wan wus, aint eet?"

"Yes, I fancy what is known as the ritualistic or high church section of the English Episcopalians are more like Roman Catholics in their methods of worship and observances generally than any other Protestant faith is."

"Den you wus divide mongst youseff, ay?"

"Yes, I don't think we all think alike, and I know we don't all say our prayers or worship God alike."

"An none of yous go to confess, ay?" queried Mr. Badeeshow, lowering his voice to a stage whisper as he removed his long clay pipe from his mouth and expectorated upon the glowing log fire-place.

"No," replied Jack, "I don't think that even the high church ritualists in our church have gotten as far as confession yet."

"Well, Monsieur Ratbone, Ah goan toll you dees, an Ah hopes you wus not goan be mad wit me when Ah'll toll you," said Mr. Badeeshow, as he bended over to secure

the fire tongs to procure a coal from the fire to relight his pipe with.

"No, no, Mr. Badeeshow," replied Jack, "I never get mad with anybody because of his religious opinions."

"Well, den, Ah goan geef you mah opeenyon bout dat," observed the obese councillor between vigorous draws at his pipe as he pressed down the glowing coal on the top thereof with the index finger of his right hand. "Wheres an relejohn have no confesshun dey coon't have no raght kin of peneetannce, and suepose dey doan have no raght kin of peneetannce an no confesshun dey coon't have no deeceepelen mongst dem! An suepose dey doan have no deeceepelen mongst dem dey coon't have no relejohn wheres all de fokes tinks alike an do jews de sam tings wit *un esprit de corps an bonhomie!*" and further dropping into French, with a shrug of his huge shoulders, he continued: "*Ce mon opinion toujours mon tres cher ami!*"

"Well perhaps you're right," complacently assented Jack, "confession and penance may be well in the interest of discipline and consequent harmony of action in any given church, and I have even sometimes had my doubts whether or not it is not best that the church should think for the people rather than that the people should think for the church."

"Sartainly eet ees!" assented Mr. Badeeshow with alacrity, taking the pipe out of his mouth, "you see eet ees jews lac dees wit de protestans, every man wus fur heemsef an wus tink fur heemsef an every mans wus try to got to heaven on hees own hook! But wit us Cattaleeck eet wus deeferent ting, *par example!* Eef we doan got to heaven

trough de chuch we doan got dare at all. Eef we doan got a teecat *ou cairteefeecat* from hour pries *ou* beeshop dare wus no use fur try, we coo'nt got to de good plasse—aldough sum ses we might *possiblement* got half ways dare! *Mais* fur mah part Ah coo'n't say nutting bout dat. Well, how we wus goan got dat teecat *ou cairteefeecat*?" demanded Mr. Badeeshow forensically extending his fat hands, palms upwards, and gazing at Jack benignantly. The latter, however, seemed so utterly absorbed in the contemplation of pictures in the fire that he made no answer. "We muss go to confess!" continued the councillor oracularly after a short pause. "We muss do peneetance for our *seen*! We muss *faire le chemin de crois* lac Pierro Bertrand have do! We muss be wortay of absolution! We muss took absolution! We muss took de sacremaw! An den suepose a mans wus fur die right away queeck *affaire* he have do all dat, well!" continued Mr. Badeeshow soliloquizingly contemplating the fire, "Ah tink he would stan pootay good show fur be a angel mongst de bless wans what wus een heaven! Dat's what Ah tink fur mah part," and he arose from his seat with satisfied mien and, approaching the fire, cast therein from out his pipe the coal which had now amply served its purpose.

Meanwhile the silent division in the far corner pursued the fluctuating tenor of its way with that beguiling pre-occupation peculiar to players of poker at "five-cent ante" with frequently recurring "Jack Pots" as an important feature thereof.

It was amazing how often the bejewelled little chuck-a-luck faker with a rashness, not to say recklessness, rarely



manifested in one of his profession at games of chance, would open these "Jack Pots" with a bet of two dollars—the highest limit of the game.

But these oft repeated efforts to capture the stakes more frequently resulted in loss than gain to the opener and in fact his efforts in this direction as a whole was a veritable case of the biter bitten.

Mons. Goathere and the sportive proprietor of the Dew Drop Inn would generally "stay in" with the opener and at the come out, after the draw, "raise him out of his boots," as the dapper little man himself graphically expressed it.

"If this thing can only last long enough," observed the Dew Drop's proprietor to Mons. Goathere in French, as the latter deftly shuffled and dealt the cards, "we'll get that diamond in his shirt front and that long watch chain. My wife's been bothering me about getting her a diamond lately, and I think that one would just suit her, if it's not glass. I'll use the chain for hauling logs for the balance of the winter, and in the spring I'll brush it up, buy a sweat-board and follow the races with it to catch suckers with."

"See here, Faro!" exclaimed the individual alluded to, "talk white!" This game is slick enough without back-capping a fellow with that French lingo of yours."

"I wasn't sayin nutting bout de game," seriously replied the proprietor of the Dew Drop; "I was only jews tellin Denis bout some log I want to geet out of de bush dis winteur."

"Well, talk logs in French some other time; we're playing poker in English now."

"Aw, yes, by jiminy, we air playin pokar, aint we? But, you see, Ah don't unstan English verrah well."

"No, it's a pity about you," solemnly drawled the wheel-of-fortune man, upon whose lantern-jawed countenance great beads of perspiration glistened in the lamp light. "It's a pity the Ontario government didn't start an English school in this ere French settlement! Ef poker was made one of the subjects of instruction in that ere school and you was an attendin' pewpill, I'd bet a ten-dollar bill to a roast peanut that you'd know enough English by the end of the fust month to beat the school master out of his year's salary! How many chips did you shove up, Dave?"

"Ah've got up twenty-fave cen bline," replied the driver of Crapaud, upon whom, judging from the number of chips and currency before him, Dame Fortune had, to some extent, smiled.

"Well, David, I'll stay with the blind a spell, jest out o' compliment to you."

"Tank you; tank you, Doc."

"An I'll do de sam, Dave," blandly observed the proprietor of the Dew Drop, as he put up his ten chips. "Ah'm always stickin mah nose where I've got no business."

"I guess I'll give you a whirl at business myself this time, my friend," insinuatingly remarked the knight of the sweat board. "I'll just see the blind and raise it the limit—a couple of cases."

"And I'll stay out of such rich company this time, I guess," slowly and hesitatingly said Mr. Goathere, the dealer, as he apparently reluctantly restored his cards to the bottom of the pack he held in his left hand.

"An Ah guess Ah goan jump hoff de fiel too," mumbled Dauveed to himself reflectively, as he finally ran his cards over before throwing up his hand, "de compagnie ees too fass fur dees picters Ah guess."

"So you didn't have em Dave, and couldn't stand the raise, ay?" reflectively drawled the long drawn faker. "Well! I reckon your hand is as good as this ere one is," he continued as he slowly and deliberately ran his cards over, "and I presume I orter to quit too—but by goll! I won't, though! I'll jess chance a two-dollar bill on the draw," and he placed that sum in the centre of the table with the rest of the stakes.

"It's all in de draw, ain't it Doc?" queried Faro as he stealthily peeked at his hand.

"Well sir, I ain't exactly settled on that pint; but I kin say that 'draw' is this kind of poker's fust name."

"Any how, Doctor, I guess I'll keep you company dis time. I'm a little winner an kin lose two dollars just 'like a chicken on de doe,' as ole John Curry use to say; mine's up," and two dollars more were added to the pot before the draw.

"How many cards do you want Doc?" now demanded Mr. Goathere of that eccentric speculator.

"Well, I guess I'll take one this time," doubtfully drawled the latter as he held his cards between his hands high up, leaning his elbows upon the table.

"Be sure an take all you want Doc," suggested the proprietor of the Dew Drop.

"Thanks! Thanks, Mr. Faro! solemnly responded the

faker. "Thanks, sir! Small favors are always thankfully received at this department."

"*Comment voulez vous Faro?*" asked the dealer.

"Here now!" interpolated the chuck-a-luck gentleman.

"None of that! Come off that dark language!"

"Well then how many cards do you want Faro?" repeated the dealer with a suspicious twinkle in his bright brown eyes.

"I tink I want two dis time ef I ain't making a fool of meself an not drawin enough," observed the worthy proprietor of the Dew Drop, as he discarded and coolly put his right hand, containing the three cards he held up over the two the dealer had just dealt him while with his left hand he absorbedly proceeded to arrange the solitary, long lock of blonde hair which, emanating from a point immediately behind the right ear, was carefully plastered diagonally across his hairless, oval pate until it reached a point near to the lobe of the left ear when it became lost amidst a languishing growth of tow like fringe which ornamented the base of a rather striking looking head.

In short, the *tout ensemble* of this facetious and hospitable boniface's headpiece might have been likened unto that of a typical mediæval monk.

But this was as far as sacerdotal or monastic association went with Faro's head.

Its inner organization would be found replete with utilitarian materialism (if such an expression may be permitted for the occasion), while the same was pervaded by an ineffable sense of the ridiculous, and withal a quixotic generosity.

"And how many cards do you want, my friend?" enquired the dealer, addressing the little sweat board faker.

"I guess I'll keep what I've got this time," was the mild and unconcerned answer.

"Whew!" exclaimed the wheel of fortune doctor; "you've got 'em bad this time, aint you, sonny? Standin' pat at this embarrassin stage of the game!"

"What kind of a game you givin' us now, stranger?" asked the proprietor of the Dew Drop, as he cautiously peeped at the two cards he had just drawn.

"I'm trying to give you back one of the bluffs you've run me out several times with this evening."

"Well, all right, make your bets then, gents," solemnly interpolated the doctor. "It's my age and your first bet, Mr. Dew Drop Inn."

"Very well; I guess I goan chance a chip against the pat hand."

"And I'll chance two dollars and a chip on the pat hand," subduedly observed the little faker.

"Wall, now, that's comin' rather brash at a feller, aint it, sonny?" queried the doctor, as he ruminatingly rolled his quid of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other and carefully ran his cards over again. "Hope that air pat hand aint thrawn your jedgment off its ke-base, sonny, old boy!"

"Never you mind about my judgment," moodily observed the dapper one, as he settled his face between his uplifted hands, while he rested his elbows upon the table. "Go right ahead and make your bet if you're going to. Fish or cut bait; put up or shut up!"

"Fish or cut bait; put up or shut up," solemnly repeated the knight of fortune's wheel, as he preoccupiedly gazed at his hand. "That's what this smart and gentlemanly little sportin' sonny from the metropolis tells me I must do. Fish or cut bait! Put up or shut up! I wonder what my sonny friend takes me for? Jay Gould, Jim Keene or some sich a pampered capitalist, I'll bet."

"Oh, go on, will you, and don't make such a damn fool of yourself!" angrily exclaimed the holder of the pat hand.

"Well now, sonny, you have jest succeeded in compellin' me to see your raise," drawled the doctor, with imperturbable countenance, "and goin' you jest a leetle two dollars better out of consarn for your politeness and patience."

"Well, then, put your money up!" snapped the bejeweled one.

"That's all right, sonny! Just you keep your shirt on, please! I'll put my money up all right enough you bet! Four dollars and a check ain't it? and there it is right in the pot. A monstrous pile to bet agin a pat hand in this ere bass wood kind of a game, ain't it? And now Mr. Dew Drop what air you going to do about it?"

"What I goan do bout it? Well, I ain't goan let you ruin me on one hand if I kin help it, dat's sure ting! Let me see what I got here!" and he cautiously and carefully inspected the corners of his cards, which by holding in the palm of his left hand he enveloped from the gaze of all on-lookers. "Well, bah gosh!" he continued after a short pause, "I'll be dang eef I doan stay too! I'm always doin some darn foolish ting anyways! I couldn't quit ahead

unless some one sets fire to de house right off! Here's my four dollars!" and he recklessly shoved four silver dollars up to the centre of the table as if he were desperately giving them away.

"How about supper Dave? Is the old woman going to give us anything to eat to-night for our seventy-five cents?" enquired Mr. Goathere of the driver of Crapaud.

"Aw, yas, Ah guess so. Ah nevaire see nobody go way from dees house hungray yit. We goan got sum tuckey, an goose, an shicken, an *couchon de lait*, an all what you want presenlay, you see."

"Well, I'll see the raise in the meantime," observed the chuck-a-luck knight after a short pause, during which he carefully and thoughtfully inspected his cards again. "I've got to put up four dollars I reckon, haven't I?"

"That's precisely what you've got to do, sonny, to make your word good," sepulchrally assented the doctor, "and that," he continued, "is the amount to a knock down you've jest put in the pot all far and squar and keerect as a axiom! And now I presume you're countin' on me playin. sucker and stayin' in with you! Well, by jehosaphat! but it would be shockin mean to lose that ere six dollars and fifty-five cents I've got in that ere pot a'ready without a struggle! My judgement," he went on ruminatingly "says stay out. Don't send good money after bad. While my spunk says stay in, the Lord hates a coward! Well, I guess spunk takes the cake most every time with this chicken—specially when it doan take more'n two dollars extray to stay into a sixteen-dollar pot! So here's my two dollars gents! Let her flicker!"

"You don't raise her den, Doc?" enquired the Dew Drop's proprietor with affected indifference, mingled with surprise.

"No, sir, I leave that fur you to do ef you've got the gaul or the keerds to do it with. For my part I simply calls," drawlingly assented the Doctor, simultaneously exuding a huge splash of tobacco juice into a convenient and capacious earthenware cuspidor.

"Well, den, by gosh, I guess I goan be just dang fool enough to raise her meself! Here's my two dollars to make it good, and here's the two-dollar raise! That's the kin of a Frenchman I am, by golly!"

"Well, I reckon you must have filled that hand of yours," remarked the small faker meditatively, "I have never caught you making a drive or a bluff to-night and I have watched you pretty close—but I must raise you on principle this time, anyway; here she is," and he added four dollars to the pile of chips and money in the middle of the table, making the amount approximate twenty-five dollars, or thereabouts.

"He's a 'stickin' to that 'ere pat! He's got 'em all right enough, I should jedge," soliloquized the doctor in a voice scarcely audible across the table. "I wonder what she is?" he queried to himself. "Ef she's a reasonable sized flush, I'd stay; ef she's a moderate sized straight, I'd still wrestle with the enemy; but ef she's a full of any kind, why, I'd have to pause and think about it, and that's what I'm a'doin' now," and again the earthenware cuspidor was made the receptacle of a copious splash of tobacco juice,



while his cards were held in both hands outstretched on a level with his face.

"Well, don't be all night making up your mind! Play cards!" impatiently exclaimed he with the "pat hand."

"Keep your seat, sonny, keep your seat!" solemnly enjoined the doctor, as he continued to absorbedly gaze upon his still uplifted cards; "your anxious bussum will be chock full of anguish a'fore you git through with this 'ere hand, or I'm no prophet!"

"You're acting like a bloody fool just now, that's what I know!" and the bejeweled and dapper little man impatiently turned in his seat half way around from the table, resting his face upon the palm of his unoccupied hand, with elbow on the table, while he watched his adversaries from the corners of his eyes with a scowl upon his not uncomely countenance.

"Well, now," preoccupiedly drawled the doctor, as he continued to gaze upon his still uplifted hand of cards, "that's rayther tough talk, I must say. Call a man a 'bloody fool all of a sudden like! Well, sonny, I aint a bit annyed at you, but I'll jest make that 'ere honored title good by stayin' with you another whirl for blood. The Lord helps a fool and tempers the wined to the woolless sheep, or some sich a matter; I don't jess now recommenber how the sayin' is worded—but here's my two dollar agin that 'ere pat hand and all comers, anyhow," and he slowly and deliberately placed a two-dollar bill on the fattening pile in the centre of the table.

"An' now it's my turn for some remarks, I guess," said

the Dew Drop's boniface as he peeked at the figures in the corners of his cards.

"Leave the remarks to the doctor," suggested the holder of the "pat hand"; "that's his best hold. You can bet or draw out. It costs you four dollars to stay and nothing to draw out."

"Nutting to draw out," meditatively repeated the Dew Drop's landlord; "nutting to draw out! Well, dat's cheap enough, anyhow; but de Lord hates a coward—aint dat what you said jess now, Doc?"

"Keerect as a axiom, sir. That's what I said."

"Well, den, I guess I goan squander 'bout four dollars more so's to show the French aint no coward."

"What do you mean?" asked the little faker, straightening himself up to the table. "You raise it two dollars, do you?"

"Dat's what I calcalate to do."

"Well, see here!" exclaimed the holder of the "pat hand," "will you agree to set aside the two-dollar limit rule and let me bet what I like?"

"I suepose a man's always got a show for his money, aint he?"

"Why, to be sarfainly he's got a show for his money at any stage of the game," drawled the doctor assuringly.

"Well, what do you say, Doc? Shall we bet outside the limit this once?"

"Jest as you're a mind to, sonny. Anything for peace and harmony is allus my motto."

"And do you agree, Faro?"

"Well, I don't care if Doc doesn't. *Mais* of course if

you oversize a man's pile he's got de right to call you for what he's got, aint he ? "

"Of course he has," patronizingly replied the dapper one.

"Well, den, go ahead and bet yo' bet."

"All right, I'll raise her fifty, then," said the holder of the pat hand. "That'll be fifty-two dollars I've got to put up."

"Yes, sonny, that's the amount you must bid adieu to," assented the wheel of fortune's proprietor, solemnly.

"Well, I'll run my chances on bidding adieu to it," replied the other banteringly, as he pulled the five twenty-dollar gold pieces, referred to in a previous chapter, out of his trousers' pocket and placing three of them on the pile drew down eight dollars.

This was the largest bet of the evening.

The onlookers who encircled the table several tiers deep were hushed into palpitating silence and spellbound with overwhelming excitement.

The small faker was the cynosure of many an awe-stricken eye, while the serio-comic wheel of fortune speculator, as he demonstratively worked his jaws in the process of tobacco chewing and gazed with wrapped absorption upon his uplifted cards, presented a picture of those mingled manifestations of failing confidence, doubt and regret, only to be seen at a poker table.

"Well, sonny, said the latter slowly and solemnly, "ef you think you're skeering this 'ere unsophisticated child of nater by flashin' that 'ere gold at him, you're wrong! You're way off! 'Taint me that's skeered, sonny; it's

these 'ere keerds. They aint quite stout and robust enough to stand the pressure."

"Well, lay them down, then," suggested Mr. Goathere, the dealer; "Hand them over here."

"No, sir, I guess I'll jest keep 'em whar they air for a minute. They're terrible good lookers, though they can't stand the raise. I pass, gents."

And now there was a whispered buzz of comment throughout the growing crowd of onlookers, some of whom, accepting it as a foregone conclusion that the proprietor of the Dew Drop inn would never call the raise of so large a sum as fifty dollars, turned away in relief from the table.

Several of the more excited gave vent to their bottled-up feelings by commenting admiringly in undertones upon the pluck and *sang froid* exhibited by the dapper little chuck-a-luck operator.

This last raise, in the estimation of a large majority of the lookers-on, would surely knock out the bald-headed boniface.

But in this they miscalculated.

"By gosh!" he soliloquizingly exclaimed, going through the form of again slyly inspecting his cards, which he held in the outstretched palm of his left hand. "I guess you goan ruin me before you git trough. But I'll die like a game Frenchman eef I've got to!" and laying down his cards, backs upwards, he picked up the shabby, old pocket-book, which lay on the table before him, and taking out the notes it contained, he proceeded to carefully count them over. This done, he deposited the entire sum upon the rest of the pile in the middle of the table.

"There," he said with a perceptible quiver of excitement in his voice, "there is a hundred and fifty dollars! I raise it a hundred!"

A considerable proportion of the gaping crowd became absolutely frightened at this.

Never had they dreamed that the world contained such recklessly extravagant idiots as these two players were showing themselves to be.

One could have heard the proverbial pin drop—the only audible voice in the room being the scarcely mellifluous organ of Monsieur Badeeshow in the concluding sentences of his theological dissertation for the benefit of Jack Rathbone, who sat beside him before the chimney fire-place gazing intently and abstractedly thereupon.

When the oracular councillor lapsed into silence the suppressed excitement at and about the players' table became so apparent that Jack's attention was distracted from the pictures in the fire and he and the voluble municipal legislator, as if by tacit consent, arose from their seats and joined the silently perturbed crowd by standing on their tip toes on the outside edge thereof and craning over the intervening heads in an effort to catch a glimpse of what the cause of all the excitement at the table was.

The little faker, as if to reassure himself of the strength of his hand again stealthily peeked at the diminutive denominations imprinted upon the corners of his cards which he cautiously held in his two hands joined together.

"You raise me one hundred dollars, do you?" he said preoccupiedly intent upon his hand. "Then, I reckon, you must have filled. Well, I can't help it if you have."

I'll try to call you if it busts me! Here, I'll put up these two twenty-dollar gold pieces and this pin, which is worth three times the amount, for sixty, and call you, if it's the last thing I ever do!" and he unscrewed the solitaire from his shirt front and laid it before him on the table.

"How much you say yo' pin is wurt?" enquired Faro, taking it up and inspecting it closely.

"It cost me a hundred and seventy-five dollars; but, of course, I reserve the privilege of redeeming it from you for sixty."

"Well," observed the proprietor of the Dew Drop, laying the jewel back upon the table, "I'll take your word for it and give you a show for your money."

"It's a go, then?"

"Yes, she's a go."

"What have you got? It's your first show down; I call you."

"Four kings."

"Good hand if you've got 'em," assented the dapper little man, seemingly altogether self-possessed and unruffled.

"Dare dey are," and the bald headed boniface turned over his cards, which showed four kings and an ace.

"That beats four Jacks," observed the faker. "It's your money and sixty dollars in the pin. and, as he turned over his cards displaying four knaves and a queen, he continued: "I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Faro. Give me fifty dollars and you can have the pin cut and out."

"Well," replied the other, "I doan tink dare ever was much hog bout me. Here's your fifty," and he pushed back to the gamey little chuck-a-luck knight two of the

latter's alienated twenty-dollar gold pieces and a ten-dollar bill.

Then the crowd gave vent to its long suppressed feelings by everybody's talking at the same time, and a chaos of sounds was the result for a moment or so.

The widow entered the room at this juncture.

Elbowing her way through the crowd to the table, she said in peremptory tones. "Now mah frens you muss not play no more card to-night. Eet ees pass twelve o'clock an Ah nevaire low no gamblin on dees house on Sunday! Suppeur ees ready an you muss come an got sumting to eat—dare wus no seen to eat on Sunday, you know."

"Well misses," solemnly exclaimed the Wheel of Fortune Doctor, "that ere proposition hits my present complexion both inwardly and outwardly to a knock down. You know, madame," he continued deliberately, especially addressing himself to the widow, "this ar poker game is a mighty interesting amusement when it's played far and squar on the top of the table—but it makes a man a kind o'suspicious and skeery when a party stands pat with four Jacks in his hand, another feller holds up three kings and gets the other king with a ace in the draw, and you yourself is obleeged to throw down a ten full on fours jest as a matter of cautious judgement! I tell you misses thar's a heap of good judgement involved in playin agin a pat hand!"

To all of which the hospitable hostess only answered: "Hoorah, come to suppeur! come to suppeur!" and scurried away back to the kitchen, from whence she had just come.

## CHAPTER XV.

*The Supper — Peter Bertrand's Toast and Monsieur Badeshow's Reply.*

THE PREDICTION of Mr. Budd Doble, junior, at the card table that no one should go away hungry was amply fulfilled.

The supper was partaken of in the spacious kitchen, with its sanded floor and scrupulously bright and clean appointments.

Upon a table covered with fleckless cloths and capable of accommodating thirty at a sitting was spread "tuckey," "shickan" and "*couchon de lait*," together with a profusion of pies, cakes and other concomitants more than sufficient to satisfy the sharpened appetites of every one.

When the ladies, waited upon by their escorts and gallants, had partaken of coffee and whatever of substantials they cared for, the men took possession of the table and were indiscriminately waited upon by the ladies.

Peter Bertrand insisted upon supplying native wine for all who chose to imbibe that inspiring beverage, in order that he might be furnished an opportunity of proposing the widow's health in a bumper, which he did in due course in a surprisingly appropriate and dignified little speech in French.

He said, among other polite things, that Madame Martin had for years dispensed greater hospitality and contributed more to the enjoyment of her neighbors than any other resi-



dent in the community, and that her pluck and enterprise were the admiration of every one who had the pleasure of knowing her. He felt certain that every one present would, therefore, heartily join him in drinking her very good health and wishing that she might long live to own as good a horse as Crapaud and dance a reel in the manner she had shown herself capable of by vanquishing him, Peter, that evening in the opening dance of one of the pleasantest reunions at which it had ever been his lot to be present.

It goes without saying that this gallant toast was received with three times three and a tiger. Even the little chuck-a-luck faker, all bereft of much of his money and his sign manual, his diamond solitaire, and barely understanding a word of what Mons. Bertrand had said, was none the less so impressed with the latter's dignity of delivery that he was among the most vociferously demonstrative of approval.

The truth is, that Peter Bertrand, although unable to sign his own name, when speaking his own language, possessed, in a marked degree, the quality of dignified and even courtier-like utterance, so frequently met with in the illiterate French Canadian *habitant* of the old school.

This species of representative of *le ancien regime of La Nouvelle France* was a common figure in the French settlements on either bank of the Detroit river twenty-five or thirty years ago; but the contaminating influence of modern methods and pending social peculiarities have largely robbed the present generation of descendants of a noble race, in the districts referred to, of that charm, and easy, self-possessed grace of manner which, by comparison, made

of an illiterate peasant a dignified courtier in the days gone by.

When Peter's toast had been done rapturous justice to, the widow, knowing that Monsieter Badeeshow would be sure to be on the *qui vive* to make a speech, with that *finesse* which so distinguished her, whispered a request to him that he would kindly reply in her behalf.

This was the obese and loquacious councilor's opportunity, and slowly rising to his feet he began by peremptorily commanding order and then delivering an address in English with unctuous and studied deliberation. He said: "Genseemans an also de laday what wus on dees keetchan; Madame Martin hav ax me to mac rayply to de tose what Monsieur Pierro Bertrand wus propose on faveur of he's helt. And so fur sac of mac compleemaw to dose genseemans from de ceetay what coon't unstan hour lawngage varrah well, Ah have mac it mah mine hup Ah wus goan haddress you on Angleesh [hear! hear! and demonstrative raps upon the table], acose bote lawngage wus de sam fur me. [*Oui, Oui, cé bien vrais.*] On de conesy, where Ah wus have de honneur fur be maumbaire fur more as sick ear now, sometam we wus have two Frenchmans out of de fahve of us maumbaire which was compose dat conesy, [*Ho donc Badeeshon! Envoy fort!*] an de ress of eet wus Angleesh. [*Cé vrais! Ce la verity!*] Bot sumtam she wus de udder way. Sumtam we wus two Angleesh an tree Frenchmans, an dat wus de way she wus now. [*Hoorah pour le conseil! Hoorah!*] So you see, genseemans an de layday what wus on dees keetchan, dat eet wus mah dootay as wan ov de maumbaire ov de conesy ov dees tonesheep

fur spoke it bote lawngage; an Ah wus preffecelay certah so long's Ah wus goan be maumbaire ov de conesy e ov dees mune-e-see-pal-e-tay, Ah wus goan do mah dootay!" [ *Haorah pour Badeeshon. Envoy fort bonhomie.* ]

A general thumping upon the table followed this sally.

Pending these noisy demonstrations which were so far unnecessarily prolonged as to take on a complexion of irony, the councilor sipped from his glass of wine and dried his exuding brow with a capacious blue and white cotton handkerchief. Continuing, he said: "What Monsieur Pierro Bertrand have say bout Madame Martin wus preffecelay correc, an lac Ah wus say befour she have ax me fur tank you an mac speech on heur faveur, an dat, genseemans an de layday what wus on dees keetchen, wus what Ah wus have grande playzeer fur do now. [ *Ecoutez! Ecoutez!* ] Fur mah part, Ah tink eef all de mans on Canayday have de sam poosh an anteurprees bout it dat Madame Martin have, de conetray wus goan got long fasser an have mo of de prospareetay bout eet dat was baylong on de conetray of Monsieur Ratbone an de udder genseemans what wus on dees house whose leef on de under side of de lac an de riviere. [ *Ecoutez! Ecoutez! Bon pour vous Badeeshon!* ] Genseemans an de layday what Ah have de honneur fur haddress, Ah tank you agin fur de tose which Monsieur Pierro Bertrand have propose on faveur of Madame, de Widday Martin, an Ah hope we wus goan meet here on dees hospeetabble keetchan sum udder tam an anjye ourseff jews desam lac we have do dees evenin." [ *Ecoutez! Ecoutez!* and wrapping upon the table. ]

"Bot, genseemans an de layday what Ah wus have de

grande playzeer fur haddress on dees occasion, on de meentam she wus got pootay late now, an so, wit dees few raymark, Ah weel say *aurevoir* an took mah seet."

And when the Falstaffian councilor did resume his seat the applause was so long and demonstrative that upon the principle that extremes meet it became derisive.

Certain of the more hilarious younger men present were especially uproarious, which, doubtless, was in a large measure due to Mons. Badeeshow's well known propensity for speechifying on the slightest provocation at all times and places coupled with the fact that a prophet is rarely a prophet in his "ain countree."

While this good-natured turmoil was at its height Peter Bertrand left his seat at the head of the table and seeking out his daughter Blanche, whom he found amidst a bevy of mischievous girls about her own age standing near the doorway leading to the dancing dining room, he enjoined her in a kindly way to at once prepare for departure homewards.

This was the signal for a general stampede of the girls upstairs to the widow's bedroom, where their wraps had been left—while Peter returned to his place at the table as the cries, "*Envoy donc encore Badeeshon! Envoy donc! Vous n'avez pas parlez assez! Encore! Encore!*" were gradually subsiding.

At all events, Peter once in his seat again, in view of its being long past midnight, found little difficulty in obtaining the attention of the company to a few pertinent and well chosen remarks on the propriety of bringing the evening's fun to a close by thanking the widow and her daughter for

their bountiful hospitality and quietly dispersing for their homes as rapidly as possible.

This suggestion very generally seemed to strike the elder men present as a very proper one, and of course the younger *cavaliers* were on the *qui vive* to escort their *belles* to their respective habitations.

So, that within another half hour, after many *bon soirs*, *adieux*, and much harmless badinage as each took their respective departure the goodly company had dispersed, leaving the widow, aided by her daughter and the assistance of two female domestics, to gather up the *debris* of the supper, wash the dishes, and generally put the house in order.

The two fakers and the redoubtable proprietor of the Dew Drop Inn sought accommodation for the remainder of the night, or rather morning, at the near-by hostelry of Monsieur Goathere, where, on their arrival before the race, they had put up their respective horses and sleighs.

Jack Rathbone, Charley Ford, and the now thoroughly gorged band were thus left the sole inmates of the household apart from the busy members of the family, Mr. Budd Doble, Junior, and the servants.

While the two young friends from the city sleepily waited in the sitting room to be shown to their joint tall posted feather bed in the room specially set aside for the accommodation of favored boarders and distinguished itinerant guests, they endeavored to amuse and keep themselves awake the while with Mons. Duplessis, who sat with legs outstretched in a limp and lazy, owl-like way gazing upon the slowly dying fire.

He was for the nonce manifestly surfeited with the good things of this life, gastronomically speaking, and irresistably inclined to take refuge in sleep.

He listlessly held between his teeth an ebony hued clay pipe, dependent from the bowl of which was a diminutive steel chain holding a tin cover for the same.

It was only now that the boys became fully alive to the eccentricity of the professor's make-up.

He was habited in a smock or blouse of grey home-spun with a belt of the same material about his rotund waist, while his trousers, which were stuffed inside his cloth-topped shoepacs fastened with "babeech" strings, were a light shade of blue also of home manufactured material.

His neck was encircled with a conspicuous scarlet kerchief tied in a crude knot, which habitually appeared immediately forward of his right ear, through which was pierced, in common with its fellow-ear on the other side of his head, a small gold ring.

"I tell you!" exclaimed Jack, "you were mighty mad with the widow to-night, weren't you, professor?"

"Well, yas, Ah wus pootay mad at de fust of eet," he replied with sleepily drooping eyelids, as he took the pipe out of his mouth and stuck it in his belt like a dagger, "bot Ah have forgeeve heur acose she have beat Pierro Bertrand een dat reel. When Ah have see heur do dat, bah gosh! Ah wus sateesfy, an Ah've forgeeve heur."

"That's right, professor," chaffingly exclaimed Charley Ford in approval, "to forgive is divine, you know."

"To forgeeve ees davvanne, ay? Aw, well, Ah suepose so," slowly responded Mons. Duplessis, with drooping head

and a shrug of his shoulders. "*Mais* Ah'll toll you, monsieur, whenever Ah wus feel up on mah eenside jews lac Ah wus now, Ah nevaire care nutting 'bout what's go on on de houtside ov me," and he raised his head for an instant and smiled a ghastly, maudlin smile, as if in duty bound, at the joke.

"What are you chiefly filled up with now, professor?" asked Jack with an assumption of deference.

"Well, you see," he replied, with another sleepy shrug of his round shoulders, "Ah've dreenk good deel ov *boisson* durin de day, *mais* Ah wus mossly feel up wit *couchon de lait* jews at de présen tam."

"That's roast pig, isn't it?" enquired Charley.

"*Oui, monsieur*, Ah bleeve dat's de nam what he's have on Angleesh," he observed, with a sleepy nod of approval.

"So you like roast pig, do you, professor?" asked Jack, winking at Charley.

"Roas peeg!" exclaimed Monsieur Duplessis, with an inane smile of enthusiasm, rousing himself up for the moment, "you could bet yo laf Ah do, monsieur! Dare wus nutting on de worl so good fur eat lac *couchon de lait*—what's you calls roas peeg! Ah've eat so moch of dat at sup-peur dat, bah gosh! at de presen tam Ah wus feel jews lac Ah wus peeg cleen trough bote heenside an houtside ov meseff," and again the ghastly, sleepy, maudlin smile flitted o'er the obese rubicund countenance.

"Well," exclaimed David, the driver, as he appeared at the door with a lighted tallow dip in his hand at that instant. "Dat's a fac; you looks lac a peeg on de houtside ov you fur sure, fur sure!"

"Oh, go way, Dawveed! doan boddeur me!" and Monsieur Duplessis' chin fell upon his broad chest, apparently as evidence of the first throes of a resounding slumber.

"Monsieur Ratbone," said Dave, addressing Jack deferentially, "de misses an Rosalie wus beesay on de keetchan, an dey toll me Ah wus to come an show bote ov you to yo bed, wheech wus now redday."

"All right Dave, we're ready too," and the two truants arose and followed David upstairs to bed.

It was well on towards daylight when Madame Martin, Rosalie and the others of the household retired, but when they did do so the hospitable hostelry had resumed its pristine appearance of order and the famous widow's ball had become a not unimportant or unsatisfactory item in the somewhat eventful history thereof.



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## CHAPTER XVI.

### *Reactionary Reflections.*

**T**HE DRIVE back to the city along the *bordage* of the frozen lake and river the following bright Sabbath morning might have been a pleasantly exhilarating one to the boys, but for the inward ruminations of each of them, albeit each of them were not in the same degree of mental perturbation.

Charley Ford, whose widowed mother regarded him as the *summum bonum* of filial perfection when she was pleased with him, had unconsciously allowed her love to assume the Platonic form of an exacting woman of her own son's age, with, of course on occasion, all the sublime self-sacrificing characteristics of a devoted mother's love. Hence it was that so long as there was no suspicion of another woman in the case, young or old, the loving intimacy 'twixt mother and son was one of those divine manifestations of our kind's better qualities, which goes far towards compensating for our wretched normally inherent carnalism and its subsequent disenchanting growth to selfish worldliness.

Yet, let there be another woman with a modicum of tangibility appear upon the scene, and in nine cases out of ten the divinity of such maternal love takes flight and leaves in its stead the unnatural and unreasoning passion of a jealous woman.

While this eccentric sort of motherly affection may be of rare occurrence in well regulated society, howbeit it is not

without constantly existing exemplification; and where it does exhibit itself it seldom fails of being a detriment rather than a moral and material advantage to its filial object.

The tendency to harbor such a love for their sons on the part of occasional mothers is no doubt largely the reason why the average mother-in-law is proverbially held in such real or Pickwickian disrepute.

Mrs. Ford, especially as to Charley, the eldest of her two sons, was the kind of mother in question, and in her exacting demands for explanations of what he had been doing during his sometimes surreptitious absences from home (as on the present occasion) had gotten to make him frequently feel a repugnance to going back to be subjected to the catechism of questions he was sure to be.

How many an unfortunate has desperately plunged deeper into the mire of misbehavior and sin by prolonging a spree or other truant delinquency, simply because of this fear or repugnance to going home "to face the music!"

It would seem quite within the range of reason to assume that if the prodigal son of old had not been reduced to corn husks and pig swill as articles of daily diet, he'd never have returned home at all to confront an outraged parent with *peccavi* upon his lips, and thus have robbed succeeding generations of a didactic and exemplary story.

While, from a human philosophical point of view, it may be a humiliating fact to contemplate, yet it none the less is the fact that the vulgar and irrepressible stomach of mankind has greater stimulating influence for good or evil over its actions than has the allegorical heart, about which poets have continued to sing from time immemorial.

May it not be that your true poet when the *divine afflatus* moves him is too much of a gentleman to call vulgar things by their right names, and while he calls it heart means stomach all the time?

It was not however the condition of either Charley Ford's heart or his stomach which disturbed his mental serenity as the speedy little pony Bijou scurried him and his now silent *fidus achates* over the glib ice along the snow clad shore on down towards the city.

As intimated before, it was the prospective maternal catechism of explanations—the outcome of a jealous solicitude—and the probable prevarication he thought he should have to resort to to smooth things over when he reached home that made him feel ill at ease.

He, however, felt that these objectionable qualms once being swallowed, he had it within the repertory of his romantic resources to soothe the exacting and suspicious maternal breast on his arrival at the Ford domicile.

But with Jack Rathbone it was different.

With that conscious stricken presentiment of the evil-doer under given circumstances, in view of his father's latter-day jealous and rigid treatment of him, he felt that he was going back to a disturbed and unhappy household with his poor, fondly devoted, little mother as the patient scape-goat of his own inconsiderate, disobedient conduct.

Hence it was that as they swiftly approached the ferry crossing to Detroit in moody silence the solitary male scion of the house of Rathbone, in respect of his mental ruminations, might have been likened unto a guilty culprit being carried unresisting back to retributive justice.

The steamer *Victoria* having Gracie and Emily on board was just in the act of forcing her way through an accumulated jam of thick ice to her moorings as the pony slackened speed at the eastern corner of the short decline leading to the dock at Windsor. And it was rather a relief to Master Jack's saturnine condition of mind to espy his pretty little sister and his favorite girl friend, the daughter of his father's junior business partner, leaning upon the railing at the forward part of the vessel, as with difficulty she crushed her way to the landing.

Never a word had passed between the girls as they were borne across the ice-clad river.

Miss Ritter silently munched away at her gum and gazed absorbedly over the railing at the receding ice, over which at times the steamer seemed to fly and then again at times was forced to partially stop and do battle with—while Gracie Rathbone, minus the gum-chewing—(an industry she had learned to confine to home uses) stood alongside her and also contemplatively gazed down upon the receding ice in a nervous and dissatisfied frame of mind.

She was annoyed with Emily—yes very much annoyed indeed—because of the heartless manner in which she had insinuated to that brusque, old captain that she, Gracie Rathbone, was in love with Charley Ford.

She was quite certain she was not in love with Charley Ford, nor had she ever thought of loving him.

Of course she liked Charley Ford as a friend! Of course she did, and she had always worn the plain little frosted old gold ring he had given her as a philopena present now near two years ago.

She did not see how any one could well help liking Charley Ford as a friend—he was so nice and such a cherished friend of dear old Jack's!

And then too what that rough old Captain had said was quite true! He was by far the handsomest young man in Detroit! In fact, Charley Ford was the best looking young fellow she'd ever set eyes on in all her live-long life! And how mean it was of Emily to dislike him as she made out she did—call him a dude and say such wicked, sarcastic things of him.

She was quite certain that if Emily ever repeated that sort of thing in her presence she never'd have anything to do with her again.

No, never, never! She was quite certain of that!

Why, the best assurance any one could have that Charley Ford was just all right and a noble fellow was that he'd always been so fast a friend and favorite of dear old Jack's.

Oh, my! what was going to become of Jack after this?

Would her mamma be able to save him from being banished from home? She hoped and prayed she might!

Oh, goodness! how could she ever live without the companionship of poor, dear, old Jack? She was quite certain that her papa would never allow Charley Ford to come to the house to see any of the rest of the family if Jack were sent away.

And her heart bounded within her, and a great, gulping sob came to her throat, as with tears glistening in her pretty eyes she exclaimed, as the steamer neared the wharf, "Oh, Emily, there they are coming down the hill now! How fortunate we are, aren't we?"

"Yes, very fortunate," chewed out Miss Ritter, indifferently.

"Look, how the steam rises from poor little Bijou," remarked Gracie, tremulously. "They must have driven very fast."

"Yes, I see. Don't you think that if they had used the same quantity of steam they might have gotten home last night and saved us the trouble of this charming expedition to warn Jack that he's going to receive his quietus when he gets home?"

"I never said he was going to receive anything of the sort, Emily. I said that I knew that Papa was so annoyed with him that I was afraid something dreadful would occur when he gets home."

"Do you mean that he's going to be murdered?" queried Miss Ritter, with provoking *sang froid*, as the steamer gradually approached her landing place.

"No, Emily," she replied, with another great gulp of nervous wretchedness, "I didn't tell you that Jack was going to be murdered or anything of that sort—you know I didn't! I told you that I was afraid that papa would carry out his threat of sending him away from the house—banish him away from us, you know, at least for a time."

Poor little scheming sylphide! It was only by a heroic effort of self-control that she avoided completely breaking down; but the time for that was not yet.

"And I told you," replied the imperturbable Miss Ritter, demonstratively munching away at her gum, "that I didn't think being sent away to some other part of the world for a time would at all hurt Jack." And then she added, after a

short pause, as if it were the outcome of an after-thought, "But I really don't see how Charley Ford would ever get on without Jack to tote him about the country."

"You're in one of your hateful humors this morning, Emily, and you're trying to make yourself as disagreeable as you can."

After delivering this remonstrance in a trembling voice she rushed off the now landed boat and, child-like, gaining the sleigh just as Jack had pulled up to await the debarkation of another vehicle, she stepped upon the right-hand side bar of the cutter, threw her arms around her brother's neck and burst into a passion of tears.

"Why, Gracie dear," exclaimed Jack as he dropped the reins on the dashboard and encircling her fragile waist with his right arm, kissed her burning cheek. "Why, what can the matter be, little one?"

"Oh, Jack, I'm so glad you've come back! We've all been in such a way about you!" sobbed the poor sylph with her face partially hidden upon her brother's broad chest.

"Why you didn't suppose I was never coming home little sister, did you?"

"No, no, Jack," with a shudder, "but I'm so afraid."

"What are you afraid of dear?" he asked with an increasing premonition of probable breakers ahead.

To this question no answer came saving the outflow of long pent up sobs.

Meanwhile her ungloved left hand with the frosted gold band, on the third finger thereof lay prone upon Jack's left shoulder.



This thin, long-fingered, well-shaped little palm Charley Ford took in both of his, and first kissing it, fondled it with demonstrative sympathy, "Don't cry dear little Gracie," he said soothingly; "we've got back all right, you see. It was very cruel of Jack to frighten you by remaining away all night."

"No it wasn't," remonstratively shuddered the unfortunate little schemer, as she withdrew her hand from her demonstrative sympathizer, "Jack never could be cruel!"

"There, dear, now," interposed her brother, "straighten yourself up and don't cry any more; there's a good girl. Everyone on the wharf is looking at us now, and they'll think we're all daft if you go on in this way. There, dear, there's a good girl; straighten yourself up and dry your eyes like a good little thing. You can sit in this seat alongside of Charley while I get out and put the blanket over Bijou. I'm afraid she'll catch cold if I don't cover her up."

And she did make a remarkably successful effort to compose herself and pull herself together. For, Oh, what a thrill of intense ecstasy had coursed through her veins when Charley Ford had kissed her hand and called her dear little Gracie!

How nice and kind it was of him to sympathize with her in that way. And yet, her papa had compared him to Jesse James!

For the moment she felt that she almost hated both her papa and that enviously wicked Emily, who continued to gaze at them with sardonic smile as she leaned over the railing of the steamer.

"There now, Gracie," said Jack soothingly, as he got out of the sleigh and handed her into his seat, "don't cry any more; there's a good child.

"No, I sha'n't cry any more, Jack," she said tremblingly, holding her handkerchief over her mouth, with swollen eyes and a blanched face.

Jack had called her *child*. She was no longer a child now.

She had suddenly become a woman, albeit a somewhat diminutive one of close upon fifteen summers.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### *An International Love Scene.*

A FEW MOMENTS after, the pony and sleigh with its contents and Jack Rathbone were embarked aboard the ferry steamer, she left her moorings and proceeded to battle her way through the thick ice back to the American side, while Miss Ritter continued to occupy her same place at the railing.

"Well, Emily, good morning," said Jack, approaching her with extended hand, "I'm agreeably surprised to see you here this morning."

"Are you?" retorted the junior partner's daughter, "I must say that I'm rather confounded at finding myself here here this morning."

"Why confounded, pray?"

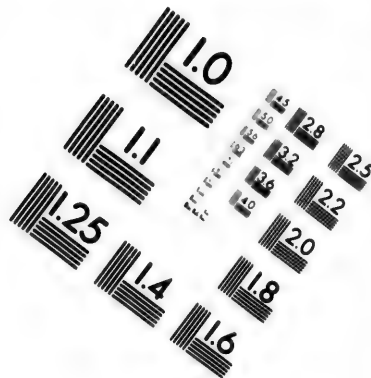
"Because, I feel for the moment as if I'd been on a wild goose chase all morning and had just caught the goose."

"There you go with that irrepressible sarcasm of yours!" said Jack laughing. "That's a very effective way of telling a fellow he's a goose, isn't it?"

"Well, don't you think 'a fellow' ought to feel like a goose, with a big G?"

"Why, particularly for please?"

"For going to that French race and staying away all night."



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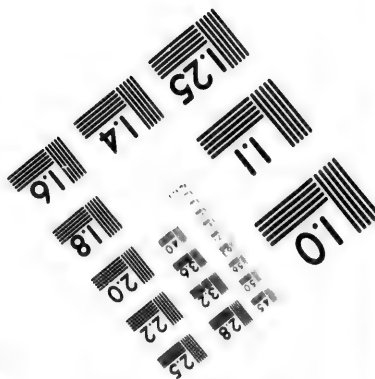
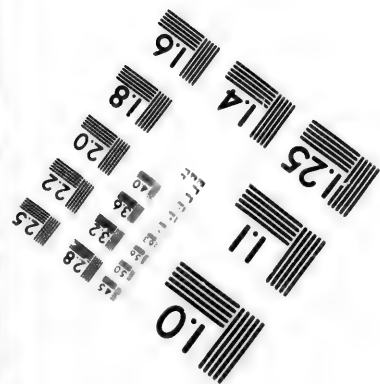
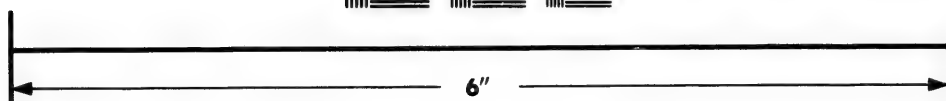
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"But we couldn't have driven down on the ice after dark."

"But you could have driven down before dark, couldn't you?"

"Not very well and seen the last of the race."

"I suppose there's some kind of a thoroughfare on the land along the shore and you could have driven down on that after dark, couldn't you?"

"Yes, but the sleighing was not good. Still I'm free to confess," he continued, "that if we'd wanted to very badly, we might have come home last night."

"I thought so! Well, as I understand it from Grace your expedition, taken as a whole, has completely knocked out the senior partner."

Miss Ritter often referred to Mr. Rathbone as "the senior partner," or "the head of the firm."

"And now, I suppose, grimly suggested Jack, "it will be my turn to be knocked out when I get home."

"Well, I fail to see anything very especially criminal in going to a French horse race," slowly and deliberately replied Miss Ritter, "and if the head of the firm should make it too unpleasant for you when you get back home you just march down to our place and mother and I will look after you until the storm is over."

"I'm very much obliged to you I'm sure, Emily," replied the truant, smiling sadly, "but I sometimes despair of the storm's ever being over with me in so far as the governor is concerned. He seems to have taken an absolute aversion to me of late."

"Well, you must only patiently grin and bear it, I

suppose. The old-fashioned church I belong to teaches that one must bow to the will of one's parents, however exacting they may be."

"Yes, that's all very fine, but when that will arises from manifestly unnatural motives and is harsh and intolerant, what is one to do?"

"Still patiently grin and bear it," asserted Miss Ritter with a confirmatory nod of her head, while she demonstratively threshed away at her gum.

"I can only tell you that if I had had my own way about it," continued Jack earnestly, "I should have left my father's roof more than a year ago—in fact, I have often felt a contempt for myself for stopping on as I have when I'm quite able to earn my own living, at all events with my hands, if not with my head."

"And what had you proposed doing?" asked the matter-of-fact one.

"Emigrating to Montana, Oregon, New Mexico or some other outlying territory and growing up with the country."

"And becoming a professional cowboy or something of that sort, I suppose," she added.

"Perhaps so."

"A lofty, praiseworthy ambition I must say," sneered Miss Ritter, "and what do you think would become of your mother if you carried out that programme?"

"Well, poor little mother and I must part some day or other, you know, Emily," and having thought himself into the nervous condition of mind he had during the drive down, there was a perceptible tremor in his voice, "but I don't mind confessing to you—because I don't seem to mind



telling you any sort of stupid thing about my excessively egotistical self—that I shall feel very much like a ship without a rudder when I cease to have my mother to go back to each day. This may make me appear very ridiculous and calfish in your eyes, Emily, but I hope you'll not laugh at me for feeling as I do."

"Laugh at you Jack!" she deprecatingly exclaimed, while she ceased her gum-chewing, and her usually expressionless pale blue eyes took an ineffably tender look as she gazed into those of the truant youth, "I'm not in the habit of laughing at the good I accidentally stumble upon in this vale of tears," and she again resumed her previous occupation of leaning over the steamer's railing and gazing intently upon the rapidly crumbling ice below.

"You must remember that I have scarcely shed my swaddling coat yet, Emily," he observed apologetically, as he too leaned over the railing and lapsed into silence.

"Then my advice to you is," she remarked without looking up, "that you'd better hang on to that coat as long as you conveniently can, because the probabilities are that you will never wear so becoming a garment again in after life," and the gum-chewing industry was again resumed with renewed vigor.

Meanwhile the sympathetic friendliness 'twixt the dainty little sylphide and Charley Ford, seated in the sleigh, grew on apace.

"You know, Gracie," said Charley, after Jack had gone away to speak with Emily, "I have always been one of your brother's nearest friends and greatest admirers, but I

don't think that I ever positively envied him before until this morning."

"I can't see how he is particularly to be envied this morning of all others," she replied in a trembling voice, looking straight before her between the pony Bijou's ears.

"I suppose you have reference to the rumpus your father has been probably making because of our going upon this lamentable expedition?"

"Yes, he's very much annoyed, indeed, and I'm so terribly afraid that something dreadful is going to happen — something that will send Jack away from us for a long time," and the tear-stained little child-woman with difficulty gulped down an involuntary sob.

"Oh, no, Gracie, I don't think you need feel like that," remonstrated Charley sympathetically, as he again took her ungloved left hand in both of his and fondled it, "the storm will soon blow over, you may depend upon it. Jack's been guilty of nothing so very dreadful."

"I know that," assented the little one with a shuddering sigh, "but papa is so very exacting with Jack, and so very determined, too."

"Ah, yes, I have reason to believe that he is all that; it certainly was not for any such reason that I said I especially envied your brother this morning;" and lowering his voice to a confidential, lover-like whisper he continued: "I envy Jack because he has such a dear, precious, little woman as you are to sympathize with and love him!"

"Well, I don't see how I could very well help loving such a brother as dear, old Jack is," inanely suggested the sylph with a shiver, growing paler.

"Yes, I'm very well aware that you couldn't help loving Jack, because he is the dearest fellow in the world, but I must contradict myself by saying that while I envy your brother in one way, I don't regret that I am not in his place as your brother."

"Oh, I see, you wouldn't care to have a sister," she replied, still looking straight before her—in turn growing red.

"No, you don't understand me. I should much prefer to have a nice girl for a sister. 'Twould have been better for we two boys, and mother's too often lonely life would have been relieved of its loneliness by a daughter's companionship. The truth is, that I believe there's always something wanting in a household without a daughter, and I'm quite sure there's always something lacking in the life of a growing boy or young man who is without the benign influence of a pure minded, sensible sister. But what I referred to was that I'd prefer not to have you for a sister."

"Thank you very much for the compliment, Mr. Ford," replied the trembling sylph, growing white.

"No, dear little one," he said in passionate lover's tones, lowering his voice, "I shall henceforth pray that you shall be something nearer to me than a sister; in other words, that we may go into partnership in loving Jack—you as a sister and I as a brother."

"Oh, Mr. Ford!" she exclaimed in a trembling undertone, with eyes cast down, "you should not say what you don't a bit mean!"

"But I do mean it more than I ever meant anything before in all my life! And, remember, Gracie dear, if

you'll charitably let me, I'm always to be your nearest friend, Charley, hereafter!" and the instinctive sense of proprietary of this gushing little woman's heart, which had for the first time vividly come to him within the last few moments, gave him the only tingling throe of unadulterated love he had ever thus far felt in all his life.

Perhaps it would not be out of place here to observe of him among our fellows upon whose soul has never flashed this first uncontaminated ray of love's bright, young dream, that he is much to be commiserated with, in that from such an one has been withheld the most ecstatic thrill of Platonic adoration possible to our combinedly ethereal and fleshly natures.

Howbeit, since the cloven feet of vanity and vexation of spirit are ever pattering along at least abreast of us, the capacity to feel these ecstatic thrills is but too often diverted into the earth earthiness of a common, every-day, vulgar, materialistic passion, but too often, alas! bringing sorrow, humiliation and all uncharitableness in its immediate train.

Let this be as it may, Charley Ford was for the nonce made better for the sudden realization of his sometime unconsciously growing love for the little girl beside him and her reciprocal fondness for him.

He would now give his mother a truthful account of his whereabouts for the last twenty-four hours, notwithstanding that on the drive down he had sketched out within his own mind a plausibly romantic tale of explanation to pour into the maternal ear on his arrival home.

Yes, he would tell her the truth about his truant expedi-

tion and promise her with a kiss that such a thing would never occur again.

This, in his present *couleur de rose* frame of mind, he felt would pacify and reassure her; and the probabilities are that he was not far out in his reckoning when the time came, an hour or so afterwards, to put his good resolution into effect on the return from church of his devout mater and younger brother to their comfortable home, to find him already arrived there.

As the steamer neared the Detroit side Jack and Emily left their places at the railing on the starboard side and approached the sleigh.

"Why, what's the matter little puss?" asked Jack, "you look as if you had heard something that very much pleased you! Has Charley been telling you of some of our funny experiences at the widow's ball last night?"

"No, were you at a ball last night?" she asked with changing expression.

"Yes, of course we were—weren't we Charley?"

"Good morning, Miss Emily," said Charley, cutting in and smiling his most propitiatory and fascinating smile on the junior partner's hopeful daughter.

"Good morning Chawley," responded Miss Ritter with vibratory jaws. "I'll bet you had a good time dancing and flirting with those pretty French girls last night, didn't you Chawley?"

Cruel, cruel Emily! *You* surely never felt the first throes of an ecstatic love!

"I suppose you address me as *Chawley* out of consideration of the *cud* you're by nature compelled to be busy with,"

rudely and bitterly suggested Mr. Ford, while at the same time he gave Gracie's hand a reassuring squeeze beneath the wolf skin lap robe which caused that young person to laugh outright at his bovine retort upon Emily's impertinence.

"Now, here, you two stop that," authoritatively interposed Jack, "you seem never to be able to meet without quarrelling. I suppose it would be impossible for you both to drive uptown in this sleigh at the same time?"

"Quite impossible," interpolated Miss Ritter.

"Or," continued Jack, "we might *all* drive up together—though it would perhaps be asking too much of poor Bijou after her long drive this morning."

"Of course it would, poor little thing," exclaimed Charley, as with a final squeeze of Gracie's hand beneath the robe he got out of the sleigh, "I'd prefer to walk," and the steamer having reached her dock, with an orthodox lifting of his cap, and an obeisance specially directed towards the glowing, albeit trembling little object of his first genuine love, he proceeded to take his departure.

"I may have to come around and see you some time during the day if I can get away, Charley," said Jack.

"All right old chap. You'll find me at home all the afternoon," was the reply as he walked ashore with the other foot passengers and thence up the street.

Thus it was that Jack and Gracie first drove Miss Ritter home and then themselves proceeded homewards to the Rathbone mansion.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### *A Son of Erin.*

AND SO IT came to pass, as hereinbefore related, that Mr. Robert Rathbone, after a night and morning of marital bullying and paternal fuming, betook himself to church on this particular Sabbath morning, after an absence therefrom extending over several moons.

If Jack, instead of being away upon the reprehensible expedition he had stolen off upon, had been at home really ill and unable to attend divine service, Mr. Rathbone's comatose sense of duty to God and society would, in all probability, have remained in its dormant condition, and the luxuriously upholstered Rathbone pew at St. Pancras' would still have continued to know him not.

But the *bete noir* of his domestic contentment—not to say happiness—having in this, his latest overt act of disobedience, given him a propitious excuse for ridding the household of his objectionable presence, he, Mr. Rathbone, would mark the event by demonstrating to his neighbors that he was still with them as a church-going member of society, and to the aforesaid *bete noir* that he, the latter, possessed a Christian man for an outraged father.

When Jack, after dropping his excited little sister at the front entrance of the mansion, drove Bijou around to the stable he there found Michael, the groom-coachman at his post of duty.



"Well, Masther Jack, Oi'm right playseed to say ye back agin all safe an' sound, sor," exclaimed Michael. "Oi was beginnin' to fare that somethin' moight have gan wrang wid ye an' the pony, sor."

"Oh, no, Mike, we are all right. I was only persuaded to stay over at Belle River last night much against my own inclination."

"And how did the race come aff, sor."

"Oh, the widow's old horse Crapaud was beaten all hollow!"

"D'ye tell meso, sor? Well, thin, yesurprise me whin ye tell me that, sor, becase Oi taught thir was nary a thing over there beyant that could bate th' widday's Crapod on the ice."

"Yes, and so did almost everybody else at the race yesterday before the horses started, but Peter Bertrand's little chestnut is too much for him any day."

"Faith, thin, he must be a good wan, must that same little chisnut, sor."

"Yes, you can depend upon it, he's a good one," assented the truant, forgetting for the moment what was in all probability in store for him when he entered the house.

"And Mr. Bertrand, his owner, has named him after me," he added with a thrill of absurd pride.

"Afther yerself is it, sor?"

"Yes, he'll be known as 'Jack Rathbone' after this, Mike."

"Well, thin, all Oi have to say t' that, sor, is that that same chisnut pony could'n't have a bettther or more gintlemanly name, sor," observed this redoubtable votary of the

blarney stone as he led the little mare out of the shafts of the sleigh. "For that rayson," he continued, "Oi'm right well plased to knaw that the race cam' aff as it did, sor—but sure Oi'm thinkin' the masther was in great ado about yer stayin' al' night away."

"How do you know he was, Mike?"

"Why, didn't he cam' in here to the stable this mornin', an' fwhin he found the pony gan he axed me fwidder Oi knowed fwhere ye had wint to, Masther John?"

"And did you tell him where I'd gone?"

"Sorra bit o'me would do that, sor, unless Oi was moighty hard peched, sor! No, no, sor, fwhin the master axed me fwhere ye'd gone away to, Oi towld him Oi'd not ba loikely to know fwhere ye had gan away to unless ye'd towld me fwhere ye was goin' afore ye wint away."

"But I did tell you where I was going to before I went away, Mike," remonstrated Jack.

"Av coorse Oi know ye did, sor; but, sure, the masther wint away aff back into the house agin widout thinkin' to ax me fwidder ye had or no, sor."

"Well, well, Mike," exclaimed the truant, laughing, "you're not an Irishman for nothing! That's worth a dollar, and here it is for you, old chap."

"Thank ye, thank ye, yer honor," responded the recipient of the large silver coin, "ye always do be givin' me something or another."

"Oh, Jack!" exclaimed Gracie, as she breathlessly rushed into the stable, "what do you think? Papa has gone to church!"

"Gone to church, has he? Then I hope it'll do him good," he said bitterly. "And where is mother?"

"In the library," and, lowering her voice to a whisper, "I don't think she's nearly as miserable as I expected to find her."

"Well, I must go and try to make my peace with her before the governor returns. Mike, take good care of Bijou, because she's had a long and fast drive this morning."

"Faith, an' ye can depind upon it, Oi'll do that same, sor," called out Michael from the pony's stall, as Jack and his dainty little sister left the stable on their way to the house.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *A Devoted Mother and a Penitent Son.*

**T**HERE ARE mothers and there are mothers in this fleeting vale of tears.

There are good mothers, indifferent mothers, and absolutely bad, unnatural mothers; and the Topsy theory to the contrary notwithstanding, it is an uncontrovertible fact that, in view of the existing method of propagation of our species, every man Jack and likewise Jill of us, must have had a mother of some sort.

It is also the duty of every man Jack, and likewise Jill, of us to gratefully love our mothers. First, because they underwent the pangs of bearing us, and secondly, because an ordinarily well regulated mother is more prone to be inspired by one of human nature's divinest laws to more unselfishly love and cherish her offspring than that offspring is ever likely to receive at the hands of any other woman in all his or her life long.

Yet there are society mothers who seemingly sacrifice the natural promptings of this "divinest human law" at the shrine of their real or fancied social obligations and treat their children as disagreeable incumbrances, rather than as blessings to be watched over and tenderly cared for.

Then there is the other extreme of mother — the middle class *drudge mother* — who is never altogether happy unless

she be sacrificing herself at the shrine of her children, and who seldom ever thinks or talks upon any other subject.

This last need not necessarily be the personification of amiability. She may be the veriest shrew, the veriest Joe Gargery's wife in "Great Expectation" (who, by the way, if this deponent remembers rightly, didn't have any children at all saving the adopted Pip), yet she may be none the less the typical *drudge mother*.

She may rule her offspring, figuratively speaking, with a rod of iron, and literally with much of that purifying and withal torturous commodity known to certain domestic fire-sides and homes as *birch*; howbeit there may be no end to her devotion and Spartan like disposition to sacrifice her health, strength and peace of mind for the good of her children.

When, however, such a mother possesses an average degree of every day patience and amiability in addition to the other qualities mentioned, then may it be safe to assume that such an one shall ultimately be of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is this maternal ideality who alone lends a complexion of justification to the too frequently ill-timed and stupidly maudlin sentimentality one is often made to listen to about "me mawthaw" in amateur circles, professional concerts, and kindred entertainments.

However that may be, to get back to the thread of this rhapsodical narrative, it is safe to say that little Mrs. Robert Rathbone with her cultivated amiability and her patient disposition to suffer all things for her children, and

especially her only son, was a near approach to an ideal mother.

When she heard Jack's footsteps approaching the little library-sitting room in which she was, she arose to meet him at the door. She tried to look sternly serious upon him for an instant as he entered and took her in his arms and kissed her again and again.

"Oh, mother dear," said the truant in a penitent voice as he put his arm around her neck and gazed into her eyes. "I'm so sorry that I should have caused you so much uneasiness, and judging from how pale you look, unhappiness too. I suppose as usual father has been visiting his wrath upon you because of my having gone away as I did?"

All traces of stern seriousness had now fled from the little mother's countenance and the one thing uppermost in her mind for the moment was that this was in all probability the last time in all their lives he would ever have a chance of offending as he had. The death knell of his home boyhood had sounded and he was about to go forth among strangers to be cared for by them until he became a man with other ties than those of hers.

Their lives were about to be separated perhaps for good and aye! Oh, that this time should have ever come! Why could he not have always remained her chubby faced, curly headed, bright-eyed little boy darling?!

A very foolish and unreasoning little woman was this mother of Master Jack Rathbone.

"And where have you been?" she asked with overflowing eyes.

"I was up at Belle River, mother."

"At a horse race, I suppose?"

"Yes, at a horse race."

"Well, now, Jack, you knew very well that your father had forbidden your going to those sort of races without his express permission."

"Yes, mother, I know that, and I also know that he'd forbid my doing anything he thought would give me pleasure."

"No, no, he wouldn't, my son! You wrong your father when you say so!"

"No, I don't, mother; I know that he's taken the greatest aversion to me, and that the sooner I get out of this house for good, the better for all concerned. You know very well that if it hadn't been for your urging me not to, I should have gone away long ago."

"No, Jack," she said, resuming her seat before the fireplace, "your father hasn't taken an aversion to you, at all; he simply thinks that you have been wasting valuable time here at home, and he wants you to go to some boarding school or college for a year or so to finish your education before you start out for yourself in the world." She was very nearly breaking down here.

"When does he want me to go, mother?"

"At once—before the end of this week."

Poor, fondly foolish, little mother! The inflection of her voice betrayed how near she was to bursting into tears.

"And which college does he want me to go to, mother dear?" he asked, as he knelt beside the little woman and

took one of her hands lovingly in both of his, while he gazed into her overflowing eyes.

"He leaves that entirely to you to choose, my son," she replied, as she stroked his head caressingly.

"That's remarkably generous of him."

"Oh, yes, dear, your father has always been very generous in respect of your education, and I only fear that you've not taken sufficient advantage of it," she said, as two large tears stole down her drawn cheeks.

"Perhaps I haven't, mother; but I promise you here upon my knees that I shall take proper advantage of this opportunity to make up for lost time. What school or college would you prefer that I should go to, mother dear?"

"I shouldn't like to offer any suggestion under the circumstances. I don't think I have any right to. Your father expressly said that you were to be allowed to choose for yourself."

At this instant Gracie, bereft of her cap and wraps, came bounding into the room.

"What is he to choose for himself, mamma?" she asked.

"A college, dear."

"Is he to go away to college?" demanded the sylphide with a grimace.

"Yes, dear, for a year or so. It is your father's very sensible wish that he should before he starts out in life for himself."

"Well then, Jack, I'll tell you what college I know that *mamma* would prefer that you should go to."

"No, you mustn't do so, Gracie," mildly objected Mrs.



Rathbone. "Let Jack choose for himself; it is your father's wish that he should."

But the sylphide, going to her brother, still in his kneeling posture, and encircling his neck with her arms, whispered in his ear.

"Well, then, that's the college I shall go to!" he said, as after kissing his sister he arose to his feet and embraced the little mater. "I can't be far wrong in choosing the college the dearest mother in the world would prefer that I should go to."

"That's the college Father Van was educated at, you know, Jack," exclaimed Grace excitedly, "and, oh, he says it's such a beautiful place with such lovely grounds about it, and the teachers are so kind to the scholars! I'm sure it must be a very good school to have educated Father Van!"

"I've no doubt it is," replied her brother, "and if you'll go with me this afternoon, little one, we'll go and call upon Father Van and have a talk with him about it."

"Of course I'll go with you, Jack," replied Gracie excitedly, "you'll let me, won't you mama?"

"Yes, dear, I don't see any objection to your going," said the little woman with a thrill of consolation growing out of that Masonic-like *esprit de corps* peculiar to devout members of her ancient denomination.

Since she had to be separated from her idolized boy she was convinced that he'd be carefully looked after at the institution he had chosen because she knew a good deal about its methods for the reason that two of her brothers had been educated there in the days gone by.

Thus it was that that afternoon Jack and Gracie called upon Father Van and received from him a glowing account of the beauties of the situation just outside New York City and the advantages of the curriculum of his Alma Mater.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *The Promised Valedictory Visit.*

**I**T WILL, therefore, now be understood, after this long drawn-out interpolation, how it was that Jack Rathbone came to refer to his going to New York before the close of the current week in conversation with Jacques Laforge at the threshold of Rathbone & Ritter's establishment on the storm-threatened morning which marks the outset of these desultory pages.

The storm had spent much of its force in wind, which had veered around to the southeast, accompanied by a rise in the temperature and a sort of rainy snow, which clung to each object it fell upon, encrusting each tree and exposed shrub for miles around with an alabaster-like coat of ephemeral beauty.

So that when the sun shone forth on the following morning in all his refulgent midwinter glory the country-side along the frozen river as far as the eye could reach presented an idealistic scene of hyperborean loveliness. Even the dead and burnished rushes of the vast marsh, which constituted the background to "Mushrat" farm looking westward, became white, coral-like sprays of beauty for the time being, while under the influence of old Sol's dazzling rays the leafless trees and shrubbery immediately surrounding the quaint, old dormer-windowed house glittered and glistened in short-lived, brilliant splendor.

If the outside of the Laforge habitation was thus radiant of exceptional winter glory, the inside thereof was pervaded by a mild undercurrent of excitement because of the anticipated valedictory visit of "Monsieur Jack," which Mons. Laforge had reported on his arrival home from the city in the midst of the storm on the previous evening.

The large frame kitchen-living room was redolent of an atmosphere of cheery warmth and savory odors.

One half of this apartment — that nearest the prim little parlor, off which is a small bedroom designated by the inmates of the household as "*la chambre de Monsieur Jack*" — was covered with strips of homemade carpet, while the rear portion occupied, by the large top-oven stove, kitchen table, and tall, red dresser with a liberal display of blue and white delf dishes arranged in upright show thereon, was bare floor of immaculate cleanliness.

Between the two windows looking to the eastward stood a tall, old fashioned, lazily ticking, eight day clock, hung up on one side of which was a florid print of our Savior and on the other an equally crude picture of the blessed Virgin with holy infant in arms.

Facing these on the opposite wall, over the old fashioned flap-leaved dining table, was a large map-like illustration of George Washington encircled in chronological order by vignettes of his successors down to General Grant; and over this, next the raftered ceiling, was a conspicuous black wooden cross and white crucifix. At the window nearest the southwest corner of the room stood an old-fashioned hand-loom and alongside of this was a large sized spinning-wheel, busy at which was Archange, the second daughter of

the family—a lithe figured, straight featured, grey eyed, brown haired, half grown girl.

Near to the window opposite, upon a high backed, rush bottomed chair sat Marie, who though the elder of the two was much the smaller. She had the old look common to victims of spinal disorders, and an angelic expression, the outcome of patient suffering and cheerful resignation about her charming Madonna-like face, while her diminutive hands and fingers moved with swift mechanical precision in the braiding of straw.

Madame Laforge, a stout, good-natured looking, dark complexioned, middle aged woman was busy stuffing a turkey at the kitchen table, while her two youngest born were occupied in assaying to play jack-stones with sheep knuckles on the carpeted portion of the floor in imitation of their older brothers and sisters now gone to the French log school house a mile and more away.

Jacques himself, assisted by Francois, his bright-eyed, intelligent, eldest twelve year old son was busy fanning out oats in the log barn across the yard.

"Mother, do you think that Monsieur Jack will come this morning or will he wait till this afternoon?" asked Marie, of course in French.

"I'm sure I don't know, my child. He may not come at all to-day. Your father said that he might not be here until to-morrow.

"Oh, I think he'll be here to-day," replied the little invalid, intent upon her work. "Surely he'll take advantage of this lovely day to come if he comes at all," and then looking out of the window she exclaimed, "My, how lovely

it is! It looks like a great white shining fairy land outside this morning!"

"I feel it in my bones that Monsieur Jack will come to-day," cried Archange as she gracefully moved back and forth at the spinning wheel.

"Don't you feel it at your heart too, sister dear," quizzically queried Marie, with a mischievous smile, turning to glance at her sister.

"Well, I couldn't say for that," good-naturedly replied Archange with a shrug of her pretty shoulders, "but I've made a fire in the front room so as to give him a warm reception in case he should come."

"But you know, my dear," observed Madame Laforge as she placed the now stuffed turkey in a dripping pan, "Monsieur Jack never cares to sit in the front room. He always prefers being out here in the kitchen because he says it's so much more comfortable."

"And so I'm sure it must be," assented Marie, "but then you know, mother dear, seeing that he's Archange's beau, she may very naturally want to have some little private talk of her own with him in the front room before he says good-bye to the rest of us out here. I'm sure I should if he were my beau."

"And I'm sure he's as much your beau as he is mine," cried the girl at the spinning wheel. "In fact, he always talks to you more and pays you more attention than he does me."

"Well, it's very nice of you to say that he's as much my beau as he is yours, sister mine—very nice and very generous of you, dear," she said with confirmatory nods of her head, the while playfully smiling down upon her rapidly

lengthening braid; "but I don't think I should care to go into partnership with you in the possession of Monsieur Jack as a beau. I should be too jealous of you about my half of him. No, I'll only have to wait until my own beautiful prince comes from behind the silver clouds in a golden chariot drawn by snow white horses to cure my back and dress me up in the purple and fine linen the *cure* talks about. And he'll make, Oh, such a beautiful lady of me that he won't be able to help asking me to marry him! and he'll be such a beautiful prince that I won't be able to say no! And then we'll be married by the bishop or, perhaps, the pope himself in the presence of ever so many other beautiful princes and princesses, and I'll be the envy of all the girls for miles around!" and the frail little figure shook with a merry chuckle over her own pleasantry.

"Won't you have any one but princes and princesses at your wedding?" asked Archange, as she moved back and forth.

"Oh, no!" she replied, shaking her head without looking up, "that would never do, you know!"

"I suppose your beautiful prince won't let you invite any of us to come, will he?" asked Archange seriously.

"Oh, yes, he will! You see I'll first get him to make father a king, and then, of course, you know, you children will all be princes and princesses, because you'll all be the sons and daughters of a king, you know. And mother will be a queen with a lovely crown of gold and diamonds on her head, and her dress will be all beautiful purple and fine linen, and—"

"And what will be your dress?" interrupted her sister.



"Purple and fine linen too, of course," with a confirmatory nod of the head.

"I should think you'd rather wear white satin at your own wedding."

"Oh, no, I couldn't think of it!" she said with affected solemnity, gazing down upon her work; "only common, every-day brides wear white satin. Princesses are always married in purple and fine linen, you know."

"I do believe that's Monsieur Jack's grey pony coming down the road now!" exclaimed Madame Laforge, looking out of the window.

"Let me see!" cried Archange, stopping her wheel and rushing to the window. "Yes, that's he," she said confidently.

"Are you sure?" asked the mother.

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Then I'm glad I've got the turkey ready to put in the oven," and this the good woman proceeded to do without further parley.

"Yes, and he's got a lady with him," continued Archange, "I wonder who it can be?"

"Why, who could it be but Mademoiselle Grace?" demanded Madame Laforge, fussily putting more wood in the stove.

"I hope it is!" cried Marie, with difficulty getting out of her tall backed chair and shambling over nearer to the window to gaze out in the direction of the approaching visitors, "I'll be so glad to see her bright pretty face again! It's more than three months since she was here last."

Gracie Rathbone had often accompanied Jack when the weather was fine in the summer and autumn months down to "Mushrat Farm" during the last two or three years.

In this way she had gotten to know the family well and to like talking to the crippled eldest daughter, and to romp with the other Laforge children while Jack enjoyed a few hours' shooting over the marshes.

Archange had become quite proficient in English and spoke it very well, although, of course, with a very marked but withal pretty accent, while Marie, owing to her constant confinement to the house, heard it spoken but comparatively seldom and was therefore shy about attempting to speak it.

Gracie Rathbone, on the other hand, was equally loath to talk French, notwithstanding that she understood it tolerably well when she heard it spoken.

Thus it was that the dainty sylphide and her little crippled admirer carried on their sometimes lengthened conversations—the one speaking English and the other French.

Mrs. Laforge herself always talked in her own native patois to both Jack and Gracie, while her husband employed his quaint English dialect as a means of communication with any and every one on the slightest provocation. He was rather proud of his linguistic accomplishment in this regard.

Hence it was, that when the two distinguished and welcome guests had duly arrived and all were assembled in the comfortable kitchen, the concord of sounds and intonations of voices seemed for the nonce to satisfactorily dispose of the Canadian dual language question.

"I'm so glad to see you again, Mademoiselle," said Marie simply in French, after the sylphide had kissed her demonstratively, as she sat in her high-backed chair; "it seems such a long time since you were here last."

"Let me see — I was here in September last, was I not, Marie?"

"Yes, you were here on the 21st of September."

"More than four months ago, isn't it? Why, goodness! I didn't think it was as long ago as that! Time flies, doesn't it? You're looking very well, Marie, but your father told Jack yesterday that you were threatened with a very serious illness not long ago."

"Oh, no, I was not so bad as poor father fancied I was. You see, he frets so about me when I've the slightest thing the matter with me, that I'm always made out worse than I really am," and the Madonna-like face assumed a playfully cheerful smile as she bended over for a fresh supply of straw, a bright, clean bundle of which lay upon the floor beside her chair. "We had just been talking about princesses," she continued, "when we first saw you coming in the distance, and I'm sure neither Archange nor I ever fancied we should see one so soon, because, you know," she said confidentially, as she straightened herself up after having secured the straw, "in that beautiful fur jacket and cap and that pretty dark-green dress, you are just what I think princesses must look like."

"Now, now, Marie," replied Grace, playfully shaking a finger at her, "you know I don't like to be flattered or made fun of, either."

"Oh, no! I never flatter or make fun of my dear

princesses," remonstrated the little invalid, with serio-comic countenance: "although I sometimes feel it my duty to tell them how beautiful they are."

At this juncture Jack, accompanied by Mons. Laforge and his son and heir, Francois, came in from the stable, whither they had been to put Bijou up for the two or three hours the visitors were to remain.

Jacques was dressed in a homemade, blue-grey flannel blouse and a light brownish pair of trousers, the bottoms of which blended into cloth-topped shoe-pacs, tied around with *babeech* strings.

"Aw, Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, taking off the red *tuque* he habitually wore at home as he went to shake Gracie by the hand for the second time since her coming, 'Ah'll toll you, we wus glad for see you on dees house agin!"

"Not more so than I am to see you all again, I'm sure, Mr. Laforge," replied the little city lady earnestly.

"Dat wus long tam you wus not here before," he said politely. "Marie wus say de udder day dat she's fraid she's not goan see you no more."

"Oh, there is no fear of that; I'll always come and see Marie whenever I can. But now that Jack's going away," she added sadly, "I'm afraid I'll not have as many chances to come as I had last summer."

"Bot yo bruddeur was goan come back agin sumtam or uddeur, Ah suepose, Mademoiselle," remonstrated Jacques. "Ah guess he's not goan lac dat collage so mouch he's nevair goan cum back home no more."

"Oh, no," she said laughing, "I don't suppose he'll like

it so much as all that. He'll be back some time in July for his holidays, I suppose — about five months from now."

"Aw, well, dat wus goan soon sleep roun, and you wus goan come an see us den. *Mais*, Mademoiselle, you wus goan stop an have sum deeneur wit us. You muss took off yo cap an yo houtside coat."

"*Aw, oui, pour le sure!*" chorused Marie and her mother.

"Archange, *ma chere!*" cried Jacques, addressing his second-born, who stood watching and talking to Jack as he stood at the table on the other side of the room emptying a traveling bag of its contents.

"*Comment, mon pere?*" she asked, facing around, her bright grey eyes dancing with excitement.

"Took Mademoiselle on de udder room so's she's goan took hoff hees cap an hovairecoat."

"*Certainement, mon pere,*" replied Archange with alacrity, going to Grace. "Come wit me, mamselle Grace," she said, taking the sylphide by the hand.

"*Mon Dieu*, Mademoiselle Ratbone!" exclaimed Jacques, as a connoisseur of peltries, no longer able to suppress his admiration of the beautiful seal fur, "dat was beutafful skeen you wus got on yo back! Dare wus no mushrat bout dat, fur sure!"

"No, Mr. Laforge, it's sealskin," explained the sylph. "Papa's present to me at Christmas," she added as she went off with Archange to the front room.

Meanwhile Jack brought delight to the brown eyed little five year old girl, who stood upon a chair beside him, by giving her a flaxen-haired doll with expressive blue eyes, which opened and shut on occasion, and who possessed the

further unusual feminine accomplishment of squeaking when she was squeezed.

The youngest of the family, whom Jack had previously christened "Buster," a brawny gentleman of four summers with bucolic predilections, being seated on the table alongside the Santa Claus grip sack, was made to understand that he had suddenly become a large landed proprietor with vast herds of kine, the mere creatures of his will, by the presentation of a toy barnyard.

"Monsieur Jack, you wus goan spile dem chile," suggested Jacques, as he and his wife and Marie gazed upon the delighted children.

"Oh, no, Santa Claus never spoils his children," was the reply, as he handed a pair of skates to Francois, the eldest boy, "You know Santa Claus sent you these skates, Frank," continued Jack, "and he told me to tell you he's sorry he was so late in getting around this year. He'll try to be on time next Christmas."

To which Master Francois, looking up from his treasures with radiantly incredulous countenance, replied: "Aw, yas, Monsieur Jack, Ah knows who's dat Santa Claw wus! Dat wus you, dat's who's he wus, an Ah tank you verrah much, Monsieur. Dey wus jews de ting what Ah wus want," and he went over to the far window to more closely inspect his prize.

The Santa Claus grip-sack proved to contain something appropriate for every one, and every one was made happy and hilarious; and when, in due course, the table was laid and the turkey, done to a proper brown, placed at the head of the table for Jacques to stand up and carve, never did a

jollier party partake of a tardy New Year's dinner in all the country 'round.

Buster seemed the only one present for the time being at all concerned about the future and its prospective cares and responsibilities. He felt it his duty several times to get down off his high chair and go over to where he had left his cattle grazing upon the carpet. First he was afraid they might get out of their pasture and wander off and be lost in the marshes; and then it struck him that rag carpet might perhaps be a poor substitute for grass, and he demanded to know, in lisping patois, whether cows ever eat turkey. If so, he'd save some of his for his pretty cows.

Marie suggested that, although they were not partial to turkey, she knew they were very fond of straw, and that he might have some of hers to feed them with.

Happy thought! Straightway each animal had a clean, bright straw laid before him for his dinner, and Buster's mind was made sufficiently easy to enable him to return to his chair at the table along-side his mother and renew his attack upon the turkey.

Jack Rathbone looked forward to his going to college for a couple of years with pleasurable satisfaction, and Grace's regret that he *was* to go, found solace in the fact that it had been arranged that she and her mother were to accompany him to New York, and thence to the college to see that he was made properly comfortable.

The sylphide did not altogether despair of seeing Charley Ford occasionally during Jack's absence.

She was never held a prisoner at home, and although it was not at all likely that Charley would be permitted to

come to the house to see her, she had to go back and forth to the convent each day, and she didn't see why he couldn't *happen* to meet her on the street sometimes. If she could only get Marie alone for a little while she thought she'd like to tell her that she was as good as engaged to Charley Ford, because she knew that Marie would sympathize with her and keep her secret. She certainly would tell her all about it when she came down to the farm with Jack during his next summer vacation.

And now the dinner being over, Jack had some talk with Monsieur Laforge about his duck skiff and decoys which were stored away in the Mushrat farm barn.

"At first I thought I'd get you to sell them for me, Jock," he said, "but I've changed my mind. I don't suppose they'd bring much, and I may find use for them when I come back."

"Aw, yas, ov coorse. As Ah wus toll you yesteurday, dey could stop where's dey wus on de barn teel you wants dem. Suepose you does go on collage for two tree year, Ah guess you wus goan come back sumtam, ay?"

"Oh, yes, I'll be home for two months during the summer."

"An Ah hopes," continued Jacques, "dat you wus not goan got yo head feel hup with sich beeg larnin dat you wus goan geeve up to shoot sumtam when we's got plantay dock on de mash."

"Oh, no, I don't think there's much danger of that," said young Rathbone, laughing.

"Sumtam, you know," continued Jacques oracularly, "too mouch larnin spiles fokes so dey wus do nutting cep



go 'round an tink how much dey knows more dan udder fokes. Look mah ole fren Antoine Boisvers! He have peench heemsef fur geeve hees son good eddication. He have sent heem to fuss class collage down on Kebec, an now what wus de raysulte of dat? What he's do wit all dat larnin? Ah'll goan toll yo what he's do wit dat! He's feel hees head hup wit so mouch eddication dat he have no more room on do top ov eet fur respec for hees faddeur an hees muddeur, an he wus shame ov eet!"

"Ashamed of his own father and mother?"

"Yas, sair, he wus, sure's mah nam wus Jock Laforge!"

"Well, that's too bad! It's a case of a little learning being a dangerous thing, isn't it?"

"Aw, yas, fur sure, eet ees dangeureuse ting fur know too mouch!" assented the owner of "Mushrat farm." "Ah hope, Monsieur Jack, you nevaire wus goan larn so mouch where's you wus go on dat collage dat you wus goan forgot us po fokes on de *Riviere Canard* mash."

"Forget you, Jock, or any of the family!" exclaimed the youth impulsively, getting up and going over to shake his *habitant* hunter friend by the hand. "Why, my dear sir, some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed with you and your family right here in this house; and so long as I live I shall never forget any of you or ever cease to thank you for all the kindness you have shown me."

"Oh, go long wit you, Monsieur Jack! Eet wus you dat have be kine to us!"

"Not to the extent you have been to me, old friend," replied Jack; "but now we must be off, or it'll be dark

before we get back to the city, and mother will be worrying about us. Gracie, get your things on, and Mr. Laforge and I will go out and put the pony in the sleigh."

"No, no, Ah could do dat meseff. You stay where's you wus, Monsieur Jack."

But this Jack wouldn't hear of, and both went out to the stable together.

Thus, without further ado, amidst the tender adieus which followed Bijou and the sleigh being brought to the door for the start homewards, will this humble scribe, with a profoundly respectful obeisance, set aside his stubby pencil and lower the curtain on "Border Canucks: Our friendly relations."

THE END.

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